

Everyone Matters Manitoba

Everyone Matters:
**Suicide Prevention
and
Fostering Resilience**

Facilitator's Guide
To Accompany Video

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About Everyone Matters

Everyone Matters: Manitoba Youth on Suicide is a 22 minute video created by FreezeFrame Productions in collaboration with the Teen Talk Program (Klinic Community Health Centre), Manitoba Government, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Manitoba youth. The project was developed in response to key recommendations of the Manitoba Government's Reclaiming Hope Strategy on Youth Suicide Prevention <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/mh/hope>.

The Strategy highlights several principles including the importance of developing initiatives that are community-based, culturally safe, sustainable, evidence-informed, flexible, created with youth involvement and that promote mental health, well-being and have maximum impact with those at highest risk for suicide or suicide related thoughts and behaviors. The Strategy takes into account findings of external child welfare reviews recognizing that children involved with Child and Family Services are particularly vulnerable.

Government and community stakeholders have come together to work on initiatives to move forward the Reclaiming Hope Strategy. A focus has been on developing school-based initiatives and supportive tools. Schools can play a positive role in suicide prevention because they offer consistent direct contact time with large populations of our young people. The Manitoba Government through the Changes for Children funding has supported the development of this video project. This work has been led jointly by The Healthy Child Manitoba Office and Manitoba Education.

The evidence on the effectiveness of school-based suicide awareness programs or curriculum based suicide prevention programs is mixed. Signs of Suicide (SOS) is one evidenced-based, school-based prevention program that was developed in the United States. As part of the Reclaiming Hope Strategy, SOS was implemented for grade 9 students at 13 schools in Manitoba in 2009/10 (including four First Nations schools). The evaluation using pre- and post- intervention surveys found:

- A positive directional impact in increasing students' knowledge about suicide
- Very modest effects in the level of comfort displayed by students, as well as help-seeking behaviours.
- No statistically significant impact on attitudes or suicidality.
- Focus groups held with Manitoba adolescents showed youth did not feel the video accurately reflected the diversity or experiences of Manitoba youth.

As a result of this feedback and in keeping with the principle of using a targeted youth engagement approach, ***Everyone Matters: Manitoba Youth on Suicide***, a 'made in Manitoba' video project was developed. The educational video along with this facilitation guide is targeted for use with high school-aged youth in education settings and is meant to increase awareness of suicide warning signs, encourage help-seeking behavior and use of positive coping strategies, and support natural helpers to connect youth to supports.

About This Guide

Purpose

The Everyone Matters video is about youth suicide prevention. In this video, a number of youth share personal stories of how suicide has touched their lives. Through these stories, we hope to show others that suicide can be prevented by talking to someone who can be trusted, listening to each other and that each of us can find positive ways to cope with painful feelings and experiences. Many people think about suicide at some point in their life. The video and guide discuss specific warning signs which others can look for and that helping someone who is thinking about suicide can be as simple as talking to someone else who can help. Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention and even one death by suicide is one too many.

In addition to encouraging help-seeking behaviour the youth in this video share ways in which they've learned to cope in positive ways. Coping can take many forms for different people and youth who participate in the workshop will be encouraged to find their own ways of coping with stress and strengthening their own 'protective factors'. A focus on protective factors is key to suicide prevention and promoting positive mental health.

Program Rationale

"In terms of youth suicide, I know that it is a dangerous progression from occasional fleeting ideas or thoughts to fixation and compulsive thoughts and perhaps plans or visions of death. This has at least been my personal experience with suicidal ideation. I also believe that teens / young adults that are considering suicide as an option have telltale signs that are noticed first by their peer groups, therefore educating young people about suicidal ideation and symptoms of [distress] would be my first recommendation towards the prevention of youth suicide...I think targeting high schools would be a very good place to start." - Ari Derin, Mental Health Advocate, age 20

Suicide prevention education for youth includes activities designed to improve young peoples' ability to recognize suicide risk in a peer or in themselves and initiate getting help. These efforts are often implemented in school contexts. The target audience is any young person who may be affected by suicide and the goal is to increase recognition and action (i.e. to talk to an adult) among youth. Additional outcomes of suicide prevention and education/awareness is to "open up" the conversation and "bridge the gap" that often exists between adolescents and adults when talking about suicide.

Keys to prevention include:

- Increasing youth's awareness of risk and protective factors for suicide,
- Understanding warning signs, and symptoms that a youth may be thinking about suicide,
- Taking steps when someone you know is thinking about suicide.
- Challenging codes of silence surrounding suicide.

Understanding the interactive relationship between risk and protective factors and how this interaction can be mitigated are challenges to suicide prevention. This program aims to increase resilience and coping skills of young people, thereby reducing the likelihood of suicide and crisis in their lives. Central to our approach is the importance of inspiring hope, mental and emotional wellness, and nurturing the capacity of young people to help themselves and each other in times of need.

Comprehensive Programming

The Everyone Matters video and facilitation guide are intended to be one component of a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. Comprehensive approaches to suicide prevention include mental health promotion efforts, gatekeeper training, community and family partnerships as well as intervention and postvention supports and services. Before education and awareness programs (including Everyone Matters) are delivered, it is essential that key elements of a comprehensive approach are in place, specifically the development of suicide response policies and protocols and gatekeeper training for all school personnel. Please refer to the document *A Comprehensive Approach to School-Based Suicide Prevention* for sample policies and more information on developing a whole-school approach to suicide prevention.

Community Assessment

Schools who implement the program have a responsibility to be aware of the risk and protective factors of their school community before implementing Everyone Matters. For example, in schools or communities where there has been a recent suicide death or attempt, careful consideration should be given prior to implementing Everyone Matters. Education and awareness programming can increase 'suicide contagion' when there has not been adequate time for grieving and healing. If you have questions about implementation considerations contact

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Purpose of the Facilitator's Guide

EveryOne Matters is an education and awareness program which provides information about youth suicide prevention aimed broadly at grades 9 to 12 students in Manitoba.

This facilitator's guide has been designed to assist you to prepare for and facilitate a 75-90 minute workshop on youth suicide prevention in conjunction with the Everyone Matters video.

The video is not intended as a stand-alone resource but to be viewed in conjunction with the facilitated workshop components, and as part of a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy. The personal accounts of the youth in the video can potentially trigger emotional reactions among viewers, and it is important that there is opportunity to process feedback and the discussion that will be generated. This discussion will vary between classes, grade levels and from school to school, thus the facilitation guide is intended to be a flexible and adjustable tool to accommodate the teacher and students.

The facilitator's guide contains:

- Class instructions and key points to cover
- A variety of possible discussion questions
- Suggestions for involving parents/caregivers
- Reproducible handouts
- Reproducible evaluation form
- Helpful links to additional resources

Delivery of Everyone Matters:

Delivering Everyone Matters requires that facilitators feel adequately prepared and comfortable with the subject matter. In addition to specific training, it is also recommended that attention be paid to the following key pieces of information.

1. Staff Training

Everyone Matters program should be facilitated by two staff persons, ideally one of which has mental health training. The second facilitator can be a classroom teacher who has some knowledge of the students. **At least one of the facilitators should have specialized training in suicide assessment and intervention or suicide first aid.** It is recommended that prior to implementation of this program all school staff attend a gatekeeper training session. One such program available in Manitoba is safeTALK. This is a 3 hour workshop that is intended to prepare participants to be alert to suicide, be able to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources.

2. Cultural Safety

The *Everyone Matters* Curriculum should be delivered in a manner that is culturally safe. A culturally safe approach recognizes that there are power imbalances between cultures and historical and structural factors which perpetuate inequities. The ‘culture’ of a group that shares a common history is not always best captured by an indigenous, ethnic or race definition. ‘LGBTTOQ’, ‘disabled’ or ‘isolated’ youth are examples of other groups who have specific needs that need to be taken into account.

Using a culturally safe model, it is important the facilitator be aware and knowledgeable about the participants in the program and be able to conduct activities in a manner that not only demonstrates understanding and respect of the varied cultures, but also pays attention to systemic issues that perpetuate inequities. It is important the facilitator be sensitive to risk factors that may be associated with particular groups or individuals as well as promote cultural strengths that can be protective factors.

3. Trauma-Informed Practice

It is important to use a trauma-informed approach in delivering this program. Five guiding principles of trauma-informed practice have been identified as:

- Safety: Ensuring physical and emotional safety; “do no harm”.
- Trustworthiness: Maximizing trust and being clear about expectations, tasks and boundaries.
- Choice: Giving people choice or control over what they do, including outlining consequences.
- Collaboration: Sharing power and including the ‘consumer’ in decision-making for them and about them.
- Empowerment: Helping people build skills and capacity (finding inner strength) for healing.

Working in a trauma-informed way does not require that trauma be disclosed, but does ask that the facilitator allow these principles to guide the work.

4. Youth Engagement

Since young people who are distressed are often more likely to confide in peers than the adults in their lives, it is important that resources like the *Everyone Matters* program support young people in understanding how to handle difficult situations that may come their way. This program is meant to begin this and other conversations about how to help someone who may be thinking about suicide and to encourage young people in reaching for help if they are thinking about suicide.

This video and program should be one of several tools implemented in your school community which support mental health promotion and suicide prevention. Students have an important role to play and can be involved in developing and carrying out these plans. Young people have a valuable contribution to make and their voices, ideas and wisdom should always be actively elicited and supported.

5. Involving Parents/Caregivers

Parents and family members are important allies in the prevention of youth suicide. Although parents are well positioned to observe significant changes in their child's behaviour, signs of depression or suicidal ideation often go unnoticed by parents. When parents are knowledgeable about the risk factors and warning signs of depression and suicide in children and adolescents, we increase the likelihood that symptoms of distress among their children as well as their children's peers will be recognized. This extends the overall network of adult vigilance, care and support to benefit potentially vulnerable youth.

Suggestions:

- Enlist parents/caregivers as allies and active partners in keeping the young person safe
- Strengthen their ability to provide support and protection
- Validate, provide reassurance and recognize parents are doing the best they can.
- Support parents/caregivers to instil hope and promote skill-building efforts
- Actively involve family members/caregivers in the monitoring and risk assessment process by telling them what to look for and how to recognize the importance of potentially suicidal behaviours
- Ensure family members/caregivers understand the importance of reducing access to potentially lethal means of suicide, e.g. medications, firearms, etc.
- Clarify the limits on information-sharing and remind family members/caregivers that if suicide risk is suspected, safety is the first priority. Confidentiality may be breached and parents will be informed in due course.
- Listen to what family members/caregivers have to say.
- Bring a cultural safety lens to the work with families and caregivers

KEY OUTCOMES:

Everyone Matters has been developed to target the following outcomes for youth:

Understanding how suicide can be prevented:

- Recognizing warning signs and taking them seriously.
- Talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings (breaking down codes of silence and creating safe environments that facilitate open and honest dialogue about suicide and how to prevent it).
- Connecting youth who are suicidal with helpful resources.

Encouraging help-seeking behaviour:

- Talking to a trusted adult can help
- Ways to help a peer

Fostering resilience

- Awareness of protective factors and experiences that appear to reduce risks for suicide and help protect youth against a range of social problems.
- Youth can increase protective factors by learning about them, choosing to bring these changes into their lives and by being supported by others to do so.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SESSION(S)

Preparation for the workshop:

The following steps are recommended to foster successful and safe implementation of the program:

- Staff training. (see p.5)
- Facilitators should review all facilitation and video materials before beginning.
- Co-delivery of the workshop—Mental Health clinician¹ (with specialized training) and teacher (at least one of these individuals should know the students). Co-facilitators should meet in advance to plan the workshop.
- Informing students in advance that the workshop will be occurring.
- Sending letters/information home to caregivers to inform them of the education awareness program (passive consent).
- An information session for parents/caregivers prior to implementing may be offered.
- Informing all school personnel about the program and when it is taking place.
- Develop a plan to respond and support students who may experience distress, or report needing to talk to someone in the follow-up cards.

Workshop considerations:

Time required:

The video is 22 minutes long. The length of time for the guided discussion may vary (number of activities, number of participants, and length of discussion). The workshop is best offered in a minimum 75 to 90 minutes. Ensure enough time to allow students to process the material and discuss concerns, questions and feelings. A subsequent session may be needed.

Number of participants:

The program is meant to be interactive and discussion based. Classroom or smaller sized groups are more conducive to this format and in achieving desired outcomes.

¹Mental Health Clinician could be a School Clinician, qualified School Counsellor or Community Mental Health Worker

After the workshop:

A follow-up card should get completed by every student who takes part in the workshop. **If a student identifies the need for help, follow-up is required within 24 hours.** When students are encouraged to seek help, school staff must be prepared and be able to give help. Responding in a timely and caring way to students who need support is imperative.

School-based suicide prevention efforts are not complete after the implementation of this one program. A comprehensive approach to suicide prevention includes ongoing prevention efforts and mental health promotion. It is important that teachers and school staff pay attention to issues of school connectedness and building supportive relationships with all students.

Additional activities can be integrated into other aspects of curriculum to carry on the conversation and suicide prevention efforts. Any additional activities should focus on enhancing protective factors and building resilience.

Avoid activities that encourage youth sharing trauma experiences or personal stories of suicidal behaviours with each other. If this type of discussion occurs, follow up with conversations about what that youth did to stay safe, get help, or to help themselves feel better. Remind students that 24 hour toll-free help lines can be contacted at any time (refer to wallet card).

Materials Needed:

- Facilitator's Guide
- Video
- Flipchart
- Whiteboard
- Handouts
- Markers
- Sticky notes

THE WORKSHOP PROCESS:

1. Facilitator reads the Introductions found below (5 minutes)
2. Students watch the video and the facilitator leads the discussion using the accompanying guide (60-80 minutes)
3. Students should be informed of who in the school/division/community is available to provide support and how to access these supports (trained suicide first aid responders). Write contact information for where to get help on the board.
4. Have all students complete a follow-up card (reproducible hand-out at the back of this guide) (5 min)
5. Distribute wallet cards. Students should be encouraged to write additional resource information on their cards for future reference. (5 min)

*Note on wallet cards: Wallet cards are available to be used with Everyone Matters presentations which provide resources available in Manitoba. Some Regional Suicide Prevention Committees in Manitoba have developed wallet cards with local resources which may be more applicable, or can be distributed in addition to the Everyone Matters cards. Since wallet cards are inexpensive to produce, school-based student groups may be interested in creating a wallet card which highlights local community based resources. Local businesses may be willing to sponsor such an activity.

INTRODUCTION

(Setting the tone: safe, caring, being respectful of others' feelings)

Today we will be learning and talking about suicide prevention. Suicide is an important issue, it affects many people, but people have trouble talking about it. Research has shown that talking about suicide with a goal of preventing it is important and safe. Suicide is a complicated issue with no single answer or simple solution – but it is preventable. All of us can play a role in the prevention of youth suicide and suicidal behaviour among youth. We will be exploring our thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards suicide, learning and sharing information and practicing skills that can help each of us prevent suicide and promote resilience.

Let's review the agenda and timeline (on flip chart/white/black board):

- Introduction to the program and opening discussion
- Watch the video
- Group discussions/activities about our thoughts, feelings and learning from the video.

Activity: Feelings During a Hard Time (empathy building activity)

Goals:

- *For youth to relate to one another and those dealing with suicide thoughts or mental illnesses by identifying emotions which are difficult for all of us to experience.*
- *To further reduce stigma by exemplifying that everyone can relate to these feelings*
- *To introduce the concept and importance of coping.*

Instructions:

- Explain to the group that we are going to think of some of the feelings that might have come up during a difficult or hard experience in each of our pasts (examples might include, when someone close to you has died or left your life, a family break up, preparing for a difficult task such as an exam or public speaking event, etc.).
- Flip chart their responses ensuring that the bolded points end up on the list.
- **Let the students know that they will not be asked to share their stories.**
- Ask the group, “What were some of the things that you felt when you were having that hard time?”

List may include:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| • Scared | • Alone/Isolated | • Powerless | • Guilt |
| • Hurt/Pain | • Confused | • Angry | • Depressed |

Debrief:

- “Are any of these feelings bad, or wrong?” **No.**
- These feelings are what we sometimes refer to as “Common Feelings”: most of us have experienced these feelings at one time or another in our lives, so we can relate to others who are dealing with these emotions.
- For some of us, these feelings are triggered by very specific events (a loved one dying, failing a test, breaking up with a partner, etc.). For some people who are having thoughts of suicide, these feelings may or may not be triggered by external events or tragedies. If someone has a mental health problem or illness, the reason for the pain may not be visible. Friends and family may misunderstand or even minimize what someone is going through. Although it can be confusing for onlookers to understand the source of these feelings, it is far more important to understand that these feelings are real and valid.
- We all need to work towards mental wellness (meaning an ability to effectively deal with the inevitable stresses and challenges while living a full and creative life). Some people need to take extra steps to get there. Hard times are going to happen in our lives, so it makes sense to try to figure out healthy ways to cope. This can take some time and work to develop, but it can really pay off for us in the end.

“What got you through?” Debrief:

- Ask youth, “When thinking about a hard time that has happened, what helped you get through?”
- Flipchart this brainstorm making sure to add the bolded answers if not said by youth.
 - **Strong connections with friends, family, and community** (support system)
 - **Info on where to get help, Elders, counselling or therapy** (Klinik Crisis Line, Manitoba Suicide Line, Klinik Drop-in Counselling, School Guidance Counsellors)
 - **Engaging in activities that reduce our stress and anxiety.**
 - **Working on communication skills to say what is bothering us and what we need while respecting others.**
 - **Speaking to ourselves in a positive way.** For example, if we were saying stuff to ourselves like “I suck” or “It’s my fault” that would be speaking negatively to ourselves. So what would be an example of speaking positively to ourselves? (You are awesome/you are great/it is not your fault). We should try to talk to ourselves like we would talk to our best friend.
 - **Hanging out with people that make us feel good about ourselves.**
- These things we just listed make it easier for us to bounce back from a hard time. They also work towards decreasing a person’s chance of hurting themselves.

PART ONE: Opening discussion:

EveryOne Matters is about suicide prevention. Use the ‘Suicide FAQs’ section below to start the group discussion. This could be done by putting questions on a white board with columns for T or F below/ beside each statement and students using a marker to check T for ‘true’ or F for false. Count the check marks and lead discussion providing the answers below. A second option is to have an open discussion with the questions.

FAQs/ Suicide T or F:

1. Can suicide be prevented?
Yes: we’ll be learning more about this today.
2. People who think about suicide only want to die.
No: People who think about suicide often also have a strong wish to live even when they are thinking about suicide.

3. Does talking about suicide put ideas into people's heads?

No: Research indicates that talking about suicide is safe. Talking about it can break down codes of silence and help to save a life.

4. Only people with a lot of problems consider suicide.

No: Often people who are thinking about suicide are in a lot of pain and if they could find a different way to handle the pain, they would want to continue living. They might look (to others) on the outside as though they have 'everything going for them'.

5. Cyberbullying is one of the main causes of suicide.

No: There have been some well-known cases where cyber-bullying has been one of several factors identified that led to a death by suicide. The fact is that there are usually many factors that lead people to feeling hopeless. The message of Everyone Matters is that there is hope for everyone.

PART TWO: Watch Everyone Matters video

Setting expectations: Safety and respect

The video you are watching shows real people sharing their own real stories. Some of the stories talk about situations or problems that may be familiar to you and some may be far removed from your personal experience. Either way, it is important to respect the telling of these stories.

While watching the video pay attention to:

- What behaviours and things made it harder for people to keep going or stay alive
- What behaviours and things helped people to stay alive or get through hard times.
- Be sensitive to how you feel while you are watching the video. If it feels too difficult, then give yourself permission to tune out quietly and respectfully. Tuning out can be a positive coping strategy.

PART THREE: Recognizing Red Flags: Suicide Warning Signs, (Signs of distress)

Handout found in Appendix C

DISCUSSION:

Key Points:

- Increased familiarity about warning signs
- Increased ability to recognize warning signs
- Students reflect (challenge) on own thoughts, assumptions about what a suicidal person looks/acts like – counter common myths (someone will seem sad all the time)
- ***Never ignore these signs. You can help! Everyone Matters!***

Activity: Red Flags

Students are asked to pull out a piece of paper.

Adult says, “Some of the teens in the video share some of the signs and symptoms they displayed and what they learned through their own experiences. As well adults listed some of the warning signs that someone was suicidal or thinking of suicide. On the piece of paper write one such behaviour that can be seen as a warning sign or ‘red flag’.”

After this is complete, collect the ‘red flags’, reshuffle and hand them back out randomly to everyone. When everyone has a new/different red flag, take turns reading them out to everyone.

Warning signs review with students:

Q 1. *What were some of the behaviours from the video that can be seen as ‘red flags’?*

Facilitator response:

Animation #1 – bullied girl states “I don’t even know why I’m still here.”

Maree (first girl to tell her story) – felt sad, said when she was looking back she could see she was depressed, sleeping, unmotivated

Chelsea – friend was depressed, was drinking (or substance use)

Patrick – friend had 3 weeks of ‘bad days’.

Last animation – The girlfriend who calls 911 says her boyfriend has access to guns

Q 2. What other ‘red flags’ or subtle help seeking might you notice-group brainstorm large/small (record these on white/black board))

Handout found in Appendix C and compare to answers from Red Flag activity, Red Flag activity 1 and 2 – review and explore any that were not mentioned.

Q 3. What are some things you can do to make sure we spot the red flags when they show up?

Facilitator response: practice effective communication skills - be active listener, avoid distractions (unplug!) take interest in your friends’ lives, don’t minimize things, take people seriously, and connect them to someone who can help.

Every one of the red flags matter!

Q 4. Do you think that people who are feeling sad or depressed or suicidal realize it?

Facilitator response: Emily states: “its [suicide ideation] not a phase” – meaning, it’s important to take it seriously, talk to someone about it and connect with a helper.

Q 5. Can someone be happy and be having suicidal thoughts?

Example response: Yes, even when people may be having suicidal thoughts, they aren’t sad all every minute of the day; they may still have happy times, or be trying to put on a ‘happy front’.

PART FOUR: Challenging codes of silence and Encouraging Help-seeking Behaviours

Key Points for Students

To help a friend:

- Listen closely and compassionately
- Take them seriously
- Speak honestly
- Get support
- Get help from a trusted adult
- Call 911

To help yourself:

Talk to a trusted adult who can help

DISCUSSION

Helping a friend:

It hurts to see someone you care about suffer. If someone you know is talking about suicide, you can help by being a good friend. Although kids thinking about suicide may not seek help, they do show warning signs like the ones just discussed to their friends, classmates, parents or trusted school personnel.

Example: David talks about ‘just being there to listen’ without necessarily intervening.

The video shows examples of teens telling a trusted adult when they were seriously concerned about a friend.

Q 1. What were some of these examples?

Example response: First animation at the school, male friend encourages the female friend to go talk to someone, then goes to the guidance counsellor for help.

Q 2. Is it okay to ‘tell on your friend’? What if your friend swears you to secrecy?

Facilitator response: It is more important to keep your friend alive by telling an adult who can help and will know what to do next.

When Emily says “you have to trust people to talk to them” she means that sometimes a friend might confide in you because they trust you, and maybe they don’t know of an adult they trust. You can encourage your friend to talk to an adult you trust, or to keep them alive, talk to someone you think can help, even if it means ‘telling the secret’.

Q 3. Mitch and Darwin share some suggestions on how to talk to a friend – what was it?

Example responses: Listen, don’t judge, be aware, observe, approach, just ask, be direct “are you thinking about suicide?”.

Q 4. What do you do if your friend won’t come with you or won’t seek help? How and who do you go to? Call?

MB Suicide Line is available 24 hours a day anywhere in Manitoba.

Patrick – calls 911 for his friend. Similar situation in animation when girlfriend calls 911.

Is it okay to call 911? Would you do that?

Q 5. What do you do/say when your friend tells you they just want to be alone?

Example Responses: If you are concerned about suicide, tell an adult. If you aren’t concerned about suicide, check in on them later and see how they are doing.

If someone shares that they are thinking about suicide, in what ways can a person like you show concern? What were some of the other examples of caring behaviour in the video?

Coach – stays when student asks her to leave.

Vycki (black curly hair) refers to some things in the video. Have youth come up with other options they felt they could do.

Talking about suicide/breaking codes of silence

Q 1. How does it feel to talk about suicide?

Explore youth attitudes, comfort, and skill in talking about suicide.

Q2. What would you be comfortable saying to a friend?

Tell your friend that you're worried. Here are some things you can say:

- "You seem really down lately. Do you want to talk about it?"
- "I'm worried about you. What's going on?"
- "I want to help you. Let's talk about it."
- "Have you thought about killing yourself?"

Q 3. Can you talk a friend out of suicide?

If you ask a friend to promise that they won't act on their suicidal thoughts, it is hard to be sure whether they have agreed with you just to end the conversation or whether they are actually going to change their behavior. It is important to tell someone who can help (trusted adult, counsellor, teacher, health professional).

Q 4. What reasons might someone have for not telling a trusted adult about a peer's depression or suicidal thoughts? (Did the teens do the right thing in telling?)

Some students worry they are 'ratting out' a friend and that the friend might be angry with them and end the friendship. It is never a good idea to keep a secret about your friend's thoughts of suicide. Your friend might get mad at you for telling someone, but at least your friend will still be alive.

Q.5. Your friend has been posting some comments on social media that concern you. The latest one said that they wish they were dead. What do you do?

Example response:

- Reach out: "I'm worried about you – are you ok?"
- Tell a trusted adult (parent, teacher, counsellor, elder).
- Ask directly (Mitch) – "Are you thinking about suicide?" If yes, then connect to a helper or MB suicide line.

Helping yourself:

If you are having thoughts of suicide it is important seek help from someone you can trust. Every one matters and that includes you!

Is it okay to refer yourself? Do you know how to access help? How do you get help at school? Outside of school? Late at night?

Questions: ***Q 1. Who are adults you can trust to go to for help for yourself?***

Brainstorm possible people (parent, school counsellor, principal, youth leader, Teen Clinic, etc)

Q 2. What if you can't think of adult you trust?

Example response: Call a crisis line, call police or 911, call or go to the nursing station. MB suicide line is FREE and available 24 hours a day. Kids Help Phone is also a free 24 hours help line. We will be handing out a wallet card with some of these resources a little later.

Activity: ASKING FOR HELP - CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Resources required

- Small pieces of paper or sticky notes
- Three large pieces of paper, one with each title “practical help”, “emotional help”, “information help”
- Large circle of support (see appendices)
- Individual circles of support can be either photocopied (see appendices) or each student can draw their own

Activity sequence

1. What do we mean by help? When we are down or feeling angry/sad/lonely where do we go for help? What help do we seek? Brainstorm.
2. Introduce the idea of different types of help - practical help, emotional help and information help. Brainstorm in small groups, and then as a class, examples of all three types of help.
3. Still in groups, students write examples (on a sticky note or small piece of paper) of ways people could offer to help a friend who has just told them they are feeling very down/hopeless or having suicidal thoughts. Groups then organise these ideas/suggestions into the three categories of practical help, emotional help and informational help. Finally, groups stick their ideas onto the appropriate large pieces of paper.

Starter ideas:

- listening to them talk about their feelings
- inviting them to spend the weekend at your house
- helping them find the phone number of an agency that could help them
- doing something fun with them
- giving them a hug
- sharing your own experience
- giving advice (about something you did to help yourself)
- getting them some information (like Kids Help Phone number)

4. As a group, reflect on the larger charts. Which ways of helping did we have most suggestions about? Can we think of any others we have left out? (Teacher may like to suggest some.)
5. Discussion: Reflect on what kinds of help students feel most comfortable offering? Handout Appendix D. What kinds of help do students feel most comfortable asking for?
6. Where do you go when you seek help? Introduce the Circle of Support (use an enlarged copy of the Circle of Support - either put the one in the appendices onto an Overhead Projector or draw a larger version). The teacher can model filling in the circle by doing their own as an example (including groups/agencies as well as family, friends etc). The teacher should explain out loud their choices - why have people been placed where they have been placed?
7. Students to individually complete their own copy of the Circle of Support, placing closest to them the people who they believe will give them the most help. Students to consider and explain in pairs (think-pair-share) why they placed people/groups/organisations where they did. What qualities do the people closest to them have that makes them good people to ask for support? (For example, they know me well, they care about me, they have had a similar experience, they listen to me.)
8. Look at the people who you placed in the two circles closest to you on the Circle of Support. Discuss, in small groups, what you seek from a friend when you ask them for help. How do you want them to behave? What do you want them to say? What qualities do you expect this person to display? Confirm qualities of a friend/ person they would seek help from (following on from the discussion above). For example, I want them to keep me company, I want them to reassure me.
9. Discuss the things that stop you from seeking/asking for help e.g. ideas that you have to cope on your own because independence is a good thing; embarrassment; fear of confidences being disclosed.

Different resources were listed in the video where a person could go for help or get help for a friend.

Please refer to the wallet cards – we are now going to fill in some local resources.

PART FIVE: Fostering Resilience

Protective factors refer to those factors and experiences that can reduce risks for suicide and help protect youth against a range of social problems. These include:

- Strong individual coping and problem-solving skills
- Experience with success and feelings of effectiveness
- Strong sense of belonging and connection
- Interpersonal competence
- Warm, supportive family relationships
- Support and acceptance
- Success at school
- Strong cultural identity
- Community self-determination

Important Considerations Regarding Protective Factors

1. Identifying protective factors or ‘reasons for living’ is important in creating a balance to the usual focus on risks, vulnerabilities and threats to well-being.
2. When working with young people focus on eliciting youth strengths, capacities and resources is essential..
3. Young people, families, communities, and local cultural traditions all provide important resources for healing.
4. Focusing on strengths and opportunities serves to remind youth, families and communities of their own assets which have often been neglected, forgotten or denied.

Q 1. What were some of the protective factors that the youth in the video talked about or that you noticed?

Example response:

Wintersage: Traditional cultural ceremonies (sweat lodge) – community

Patrick: Supportive friendship

Maree: Had a teacher who noticed/cared

Resilience

Everyone experiences stress and difficult circumstances during their life. Most people can handle these tough times and may even be able to make something good from a difficult situation. Resilience is the ability to bounce back after experiencing trauma or stress, to adapt to changing circumstances and respond positively to difficult situations.

It is the ability to learn and grow through the positive and the negative experiences of life, turning potentially traumatic experiences into constructive ones. Being resilient involves engaging with friends and family for support and using coping strategies and problem-solving skills effectively to work through difficulties.

How to increase personal resilience

Handout found in Appendix E. Discuss as a group.

- Look after relationships. Family and close friends are usually willing to listen, provide support and often have helpful ideas or know where to go for help in all sorts of situations.
- Think positive thoughts of yourself. Identify what you are good at, and what you need to learn to help you face the future. Invest time and energy in developing new skills.
- Practice helpful ways of thinking. Challenge negative thoughts and find a positive way to view the situation. Look for alternative solutions to problems.
- Look after your physical health. Poor diet, lack of exercise, or sleep problems can contribute to negative thinking.
- Develop a sense of connectedness. Get involved in enjoyable community activities such as social or sporting activities or volunteering. It will help to broaden social networks and help with feelings of isolation.
- Don't tackle major problems alone. Ask for help and support when you need it, don't be afraid of expressing your emotions and offer assistance in turn to those around you.

Q1. What made a difference for the youth in the video?

Example response: Some of the youth talk about Volunteering, we see examples of them running, going for walks, baking, drawing, writing, being with friends

Q2. What were some of the ways the youth in the video coped with their suicidal thoughts and feelings?

Example response:

Wintersage: Beading, 'keeping yourself occupied'

Chelsea: Helping others - volunteering.

Patrick/Emily: Going for walks, running, playing other sports.

Emily: Reading. She says: "But I don't know if that works for everyone" Does reading work for everyone? Response: No, probably not, but you can find what works for you.

Hanging out with friends, baking, drawing, playing music, etc.

Activity: Gallery Walk – Resiliency in Action

Prior to session have large sheets of chart paper posted around classroom with these topics: Places to look for help; Strengthening personal resilience; Learning from the past (what has or hasn't worked for me); Minimizing my risk; Positive attitudes and goals; Things I can do to help myself; What I can do to help others, Strengthening my community. Space the chart pages so students have to walk from one chart to another.

Give each student a pack of sticky notes. Explain instructions – students can rotate from topic to topic writing down their ideas for themselves relating to each topic and posting on the chart paper; set expectation for maximum number of people allowed at each station (i.e. three) so if a student sees three people are already at a station they need to find another station; they do not need to go in order. Once students have written all they can they can return to their seats. (Optional: play music)

After they've written on all the charts, learners take a “gallery walk” or tour of the room, reading the charts and jotting down their observations on a worksheet. Process as a group.

CONCLUSION/RECAP:

Highlight main points:

Suicide can be prevented

1. Every one of you matters and you can make a difference in other youth's lives.
2. Everyone has strengths and resources that can help.
3. It is important to talk about things before they get too big or we feel like there is too much.
4. It is important to listen and pay attention to what is going on with our friends – there are warning signs, red flags that say your friend might be struggling.
5. It is important to take all 'Red flags'/warning signs seriously, check them out and check in with a trusted adult who can help.
6. If there is anyone you are worried about right now, you can talk to one of us right after our session or later.

Closing Activity: (5-15 min)

Talking about suicide is a heavy subject and it's a good idea to do something that will help everyone feel ok.

Option #1: Finish the session with a ‘Chill Out’ (mindfulness) activity. Mindfulness helps to de-stress and gives young people tools to use on their own when they are feeling stressed.

The following resources offer mindfulness exercises that can be used with young people. The mini-mindfulness exercise will take about 5 minutes. Some of the other exercises may take up to 15 minutes.

<http://www.stillmind.com.au/mindfulnessworksheets.htm>

<http://youth.anxietybc.com/mindfulness-exercises>

Option #2: Finish with a ‘fun’ activity.

We have been talking about some difficult things during this session and it’s important that we let go of any heavy feelings that we have remaining as a result of our discussion. Take the ‘red flag’ paper we made earlier in the session. Fold it into a paper airplane design of your choosing – simple or fancy, it doesn’t matter! When you are done, from your desk, launch it into the air trying not to hit anyone! Aim it for the recycling bin here at the front of the room.

Please ensure that all students complete the follow-up card and hand them in before leaving the session.

APPENDIX A: Sample Follow-up Card

Sample Follow-up Card

Copy the 'follow-up' card below and ensure that each student complete one and sign their name and home room teacher/TA. It is important to indicate a realistic timeframe for students to expect follow-up if they feel they need to speak to someone about how they are feeling. It is best if the follow-up can occur within 24 hours and that if a student feels they need to speak to someone immediately that this option be available.

Based on the Everyone Matters video and program, I feel

☐ I need to talk to someone...

☐ I do not need to talk to someone...

...about myself or a friend.

NAME: _____

TA/Homeroom teacher: _____

If you checked that you need to talk to someone, you will be contacted within 24 hours.

If you need to talk to someone sooner, approach a trusted adult/staff **immediately**.

Based on the Everyone Matters video and program, I feel

☐ I need to talk to someone...

☐ I do not need to talk to someone...

...about myself or a friend.

NAME: _____

TA/Homeroom teacher: _____

If you checked that you need to talk to someone, you will be contacted within 24 hours.

If you need to talk to someone sooner, approach a trusted adult/staff **immediately**.

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NAME: _____

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Based on the Everyone Matters video and program, I feel

☐ I need to talk to someone...

☐ I do not need to talk to someone...

...about myself or a friend.

NAME: _____

TA/Homeroom teacher: _____

If you checked that you need to talk to someone, you will be contacted within 24 hours.

If you need to talk to someone sooner, approach a trusted adult/staff **immediately**.

APPENDIX B: Risk and Protective Factors Matrix

CONTEXT	PREDISPOSING FACTORS	CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	PRECIPITATING FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • previous suicide attempt • depression or other mental disorder (e.g. substance use disorder, anxiety, bipolar disorder, conduct disorder) • hopelessness • current suicidal thoughts/wish to die • history of childhood neglect, sexual or physical abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rigid cognitive style • poor coping skills • substance misuse • impulsivity • aggression • hypersensitivity/anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss • personal failure • humiliation • individual trauma • health crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual coping and problem solving skills • willingness to seek help • good physical and mental health • experience/feelings of competence • strong cultural identity and spiritual beliefs
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family history of suicidal behaviour / suicide • family history of mental disorder • family history of child maltreatment • early childhood loss/ separation or deprivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family discord • punitive parenting • impaired parent-child relationships • multi-generational trauma and losses among First Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of significant family member • death of a family member, especially by suicide • recent conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • family cohesion and warmth • positive parent-child connection • adults modeling healthy adjustment • active parental supervision • high & realistic expectations
Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social isolation & alienation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negative youth attitudes toward seeking adult assistance • poor peer relationships • peer modeling of suicidal behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teasing/cruelty/ bullying • interpersonal loss or conflict • rejection • peer death, especially by suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social competence • healthy peer modeling • peer acceptance & support
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-standing history of negative school experience • lack of meaningful connection to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reluctance/ uncertainty about how to help among school staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure • expulsion • disciplinary crisis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • success at school • interpersonal connectedness/ belonging
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple suicides • community marginalization • political disenfranchisement • socioeconomic deprivation • cultural stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensational media portrayal of suicide • access to firearms or other lethal methods • reluctance/ uncertainty about how to help among key gatekeepers • inaccessible community resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high profile/celebrity death, especially by suicide • conflict with the law incarceration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for youth participation • availability of resources • community control over local services • cultural/spiritual beliefs against suicide • social capital

Source: British Columbia, Ministry of Family and Child Development. Preventing Youth Suicide: A Guide for Practitioners. June 2011 (page 9)
Viewed at: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/suicide_prevention/pdf/pys_practitioners_guide.pdf

APPENDIX C:

Recognizing Red Flags: Suicide Warning Signs (Signs of distress)

(Handout)

1. Talking a lot about distress and recent distressing experiences
2. ***Suicide notes.*** These are a very real sign of danger and should be taken seriously.
3. ***Threats.*** Look for direct “I want to die” to indirect “the world would be better off without me” statements. Sometimes contained in art or creative writing. Younger children might act out and make suicidal comments.
4. ***Previous attempts.*** If a child or teenager has attempted suicide in the past, there is a greater risk that he or she will try again. Be very observant of any friends who have tried suicide before.
5. ***Feelings of Depression*** (helplessness/hopelessness). Strong thoughts of hopelessness and helplessness are linked with a greater risk for suicide. Watch out for sad or pessimistic behaviors or comments.
6. ***Risk-taking behaviours.*** Sometimes “risk-taking” behaviors can include acts of aggression, alcohol/substance abuse or gunplay. While your friend does not act or seem “depressed,” their behavior suggests that they are not concerned about their own safety.
7. ***Final arrangements.*** This behavior may take many forms. In adolescents, it might be giving away prized possessions such as jewelry, clothing, journals or pictures.
8. ***Efforts to hurt oneself.*** Self-injury behaviors are warning signs for young children as well as teenagers. Common self-destructive behaviors include running into traffic, jumping from heights, and scratching/cutting/markings the body.
9. ***Inability to concentrate or think clearly.*** If your friend starts skipping classes, getting poor grades, acting up in class, forgetting about important things or talking in a way that suggests they are having trouble concentrating, these might be signs of stress and risk for suicide.
10. ***Changes in physical habits and appearance.*** Changes include inability to sleep or sleeping all the time, sudden weight gain or loss, disinterest in appearance or hygiene, or increased interest in appearance/hygiene.
11. ***Sudden changes in personality, friends, behaviors.*** Changes can include withdrawing from friends and family, skipping school or classes, a usually introverted or quiet teen is now very outgoing, loss of involvement in activities that were once important, and avoiding friends.
12. ***Death and suicidal themes.*** These might appear in classroom drawings, work samples, journals, conversations or homework, talking about a friend who is suicidal
13. ***Plan/method/access.*** A suicidal child or adolescent may show an increased interest in guns and other weapons, may seem to have increased access to guns, pills, etc., and/or may talk about or hint at a suicide plan. The greater the planning, the greater the potential for suicide.

More than one sign could mean that help is necessary. Note how long the signs have been present – how deeply the person feels about the things going wrong in his or her life, and how many signs are present at one time.

APPENDIX D: What Can You Do to Help a Friend?

(HANDOUT)

1. **Know the warning signs!** Read over the list above and keep it in a safe place.
2. **Do not be afraid to talk to your friends.** Listen to their feelings. Make sure they know how important they are to you, but don't believe you can keep them from hurting themselves on your own. Preventing suicide will require adult help.
3. **Make no deals.** Never keep secret a friend's suicidal plans or thoughts. You cannot promise that you will not tell—you have to tell to save your friend! Offer to go with your friend to speak to a guidance counsellor at school. You can also give your friend the number for **Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**. If you're worried that your friend is in danger, tell someone. Talk to a counsellor at school, or tell a parent that you're worried.
4. **Tell an adult.** Talk to your parent, your friend's parent, your school counselor-- a trusted adult. Don't be afraid that the adults will not believe you or take you seriously—keep talking until they listen! Even if you are not sure your friend is suicidal, talk to someone. It's better to be safe and not sorry!
5. **Ask if your school has a crisis team.** Many schools (elementary, middle and high schools) have organized crisis teams, which include teachers, counselors, social workers, psychologists and principals. These teams help train all staff to recognize warning signs of suicide as well as how to help in a crisis situation and can help students recognize these too. If your school does not have a crisis team, ask your Student Council or guidance/student services department to look into starting a team.

*Adapted from "A National Tragedy: Preventing Suicide in Troubled Children and Youth," available at www.nasponline.org
Modified from material posted on the NASP website in September 2001.df*

It can be difficult to see someone you care about struggle. It can be tempting to give your friend ultimatums, like: "I'm not going to be your friend anymore if you don't get help." It's important to talk about how you feel, but don't take it out on your friend. Talk to a counsellor, friend, teacher, or parent to work through your feelings.

Finding Help

Call 911

It's an emergency if you're worried that your friend might do something to hurt themselves. Don't wait. Call for help and explain the situation.

Remember your limits

It's natural to want to help a friend who is hurting, but there are limits to how much you can do. Try to be there for your friend by encouraging them to get the help they need, but don't make yourself responsible for your friend's actions. You can't control what happens, but you can be proud of yourself for being a caring friend.

Online support

There are a lot of good online supports. Check some of these out:

www.kidshelpphone.ca

www.reasonstolive.ca

www.mindyourmind.ca

www.honouringlife.ca

APPENDIX E: 10 Tips to Build Resilience

Every one of us faces times of anxiety, stress and pain. These suggestions are ideas for ways to help you get through the tough times. Taking these small steps can help reduce even normal levels of stress that come with life as a young person. They won't help everybody all the time, but even a little can make a difference.

1. Connect: Get Together

Spend time with other people. Talk with your peers and share as many positive experiences with them as you can. Find time for your parents or guardians. It may seem like these adults don't understand you. Ask them to try. Show respect and patience. If both you and they can take the time to listen, fear and misunderstanding can clear off, leaving space for understanding. We all need the support of others.

2. Contribute: Help Somebody

Even little efforts can go a long way to help others, and make you feel good about pitching in. Try helping a little kid with homework, or picking up around the neighborhood. Elderly folks often need help carrying heavy groceries or reading the news. Adults really appreciate contribution of time from youths, and that time can help dispel myths and misunderstanding between generations.

3. Choose: Use Common Sense

Life is all about making decisions. We use our common sense most of the time. But how do we know that we have sound judgement? We ask others and we listen to our gut. Our instincts are usually pretty good, but sometimes we need feedback from others to know what's right. Make sure to ask people that you believe are looking out for your best interests and have a track record of good judgement.

4. Practice: Follow Your Plan

Routines create stability in life, a kind of structure for the many changes and challenges we face every day. It's always a good idea to have a loose plan for the coming days and weeks, especially during a time of major stress. Try mapping out a routine to provide some consistency for your day. It's not like it won't change, but it gives you some idea of what's ahead and how you're going to deal with it. Build in time for getting things done, checking in with friends, and doing things just for you.

5. Create: Express Yourself

Experiencing pain, severe anxiety or tragedy you might feel like you want to explode. Your feelings are confusing and powerful. It might be really hard to talk to someone about what your emotions are doing to you. Creative expression can be a helpful way to get your feelings out, to work through them in a constructive way. Write, draw, sculpt, dance - there are as many ways to show your feelings as there are emotions.

6. Rest: Create a Stress-Free Zone

Pain and stress do pass over time. As you work through these overwhelming emotions, allow yourself time to heal. Make a safe place in your home that is free from conflict and anxiety-producing worries. Make it comfortable and without distractions, such as computers or television. Use your time there to focus on the positive things in your life and the skills you've developed to get through challenges, work on relaxation techniques with music or breathing. Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing. Turn your mind toward good times and memories as you heal in this space.

7. Care: Do the Body Good

Everybody has different self-care habits, but when you're distressed, it's really important to pay better attention to taking care of yourself in all ways; physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Remember to exercise daily, eat a balanced diet and go easy on the junk food, get solid sleep at night, and drink plenty of water. To keep up with everything, your first goal should be to look after yourself.

8. Discover: Learn From Role Models

Many people consider themselves life-long learners, just to keep life interesting and to allow us room to grow and adapt to the changing world around us. Be sure to choose teachers who are role models who you respect and trust. Just as you wouldn't follow a stranger home if you were wandering around Times Square in New York City, you wouldn't follow just anyone in life. Surround yourself with people who align with your values and have strong ethical character.

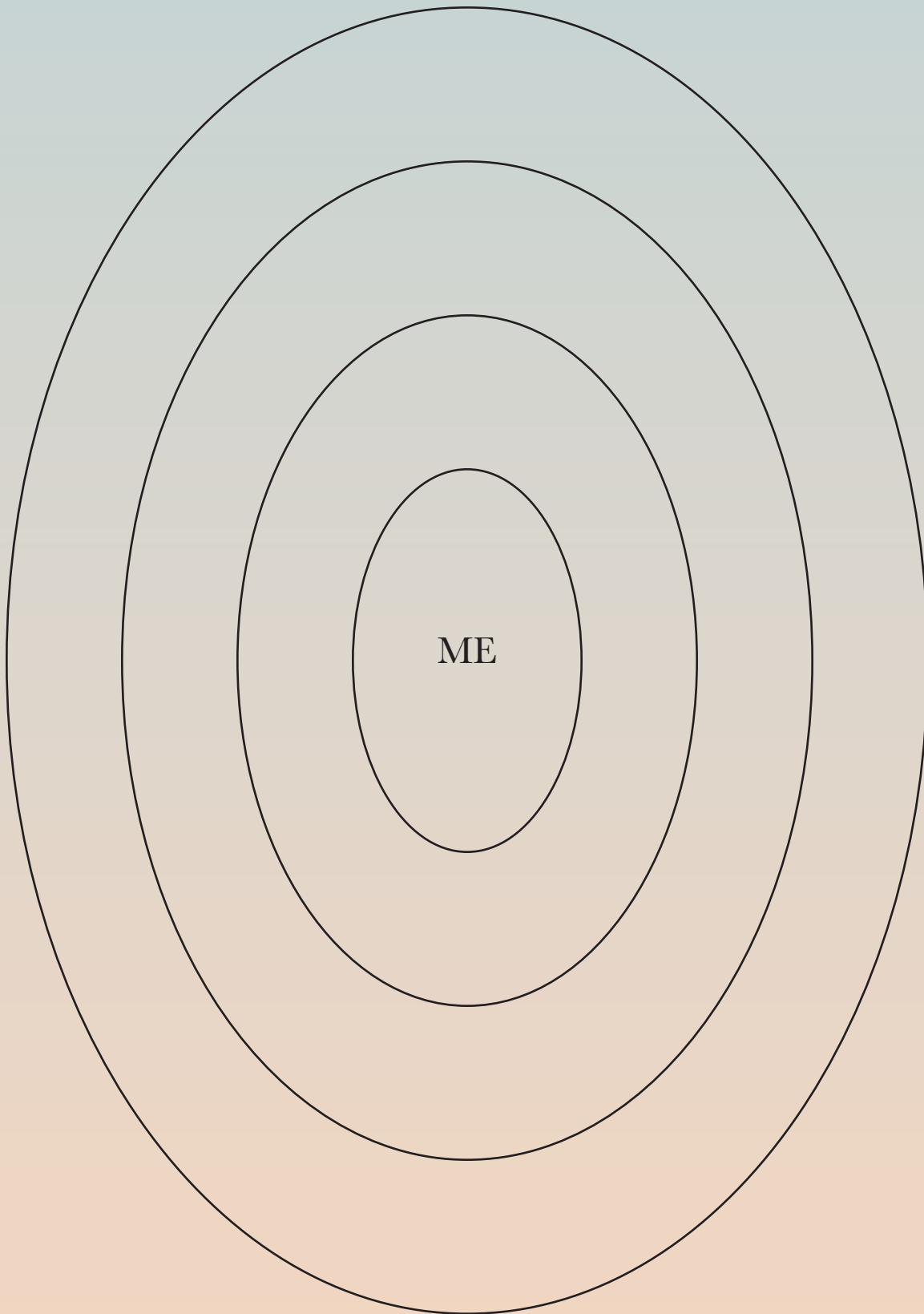
9. Overcome: Take Control

Even in the midst of tragedy, you can move toward goals with small steps. During a really hard time, just getting out of bed and going to school may be all you can handle, but even accomplishing that can help. Bad times make us feel out of control. By taking positive decisive actions in baby steps, you'll be moving in the right direction.

10. Protect: Be Kind to Yourself

As we connect to the world and each other, we take risks. That's natural and an important part of our growth. Be sure to measure your risks and be smart, both in terms of safety and also in terms of exposure. Try to limit the amount of media you expose yourself to, whether it's from social networks, television, or other news sources. When you need to be informed, make sure to check a reliable source. Sensational media can increase stress levels unnecessarily without improving knowledge.

Circle of Supports



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The top portion of the page features a light blue background color, while the rest of the page is white. There are evenly spaced horizontal lines across the entire width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. No text or other markings are present on the page.

