



The Seven Project is a multimedia, speaker-driven school assembly. The Seven Project Assemblies entertain and captivate audiences all across the United States. Seven addresses real-life issues and situations students face every day. The Seven Project Discussion Guides culminate the Seven Project experience by creating intensified discussions about student life.

The activities and discussions in these guides are designed for use in single classroom settings or as entire school or community-wide campaigns. The Seven Project offers these guides as tools for use at the discretion of local school educators and administrators in part or entirety. The Seven Project and your school: *building students' hope...one issue at a time.*

## SUICIDE

*For Grades 6-12. Students will discuss and gain an understanding of the danger signs of those who are contemplating suicide. Students will learn practical ways to help their friends find help.*

### Objectives:

- Understand potential signs of students who are at risk for suicide.
- Gain an understanding of how to reach out to their peers who are struggling with suicide.
- Implement ways of changing their classroom or school environment to help their suicidal, at-risk friends.

### Materials Needed:

- Copies of *Suicide Warning/Watch Signs* and *Overcoming Suicide* for every student.
- Optional: 1-2 sheets of poster board and index cards (one per student)

### Discussion:

- 1) What issues/messages from The Seven Project School Assembly stood out to you the most? Why?
  - \*Transition: *"In our classroom time today, (principal's name) and I felt it was important that we follow-up on one of the topics: suicide, since this is something we deal with at our school."*
- 2) (Show of hands) Who knows someone who has talked about, attempted or committed suicide?
- 3) Do you think people want others to know when they are hurting? Why?
- 4) Do you think someone gives "warning signs" when thinking about suicide? If so, what are they?
  - \*Pass out copies of the ***Suicide Warning/Watch Signs***.
  - Do any of these warning signs stand out to you?
- 5) Do many in our school think about suicide?
- 6) If someone you knew began talking about suicide would you take it seriously? What should be your response, even if they might be joking about it?
  - \*Pass out ***Overcoming Suicide*** sheet.
  - What are more ideas not on this list?

**Extensions and Adaptations:**

- Develop a *Why Live* campaign for your school or class. Have each student in your class bring a picture that represents life. Place them on a piece of poster board as a collage. Have students write on index cards one reason to live. Place the card by that student's collage image.

**Online Resources:**

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

Knowledge Exchange Network  
[www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention](http://www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention)

National Mental Health Association  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)

Suicide Crisis Center  
[www.suicidecrisiscenter.com](http://www.suicidecrisiscenter.com)

**Relevant National Standards**

McREL establishes the following National Standards at [www.mcrel.org](http://www.mcrel.org)

**Thinking and Reasoning**

- Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning

**Life Skills**

- Self Regulation: Considers Risks
- Working with others: Contributes to the overall effort of a group
- Working with others: Displays effective interpersonal communications skills

**Language Arts – Listening and Speaking**

- Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools



## Suicide Warning/Watch List

### Depression warning/watch signs

- Sadness, low moods
- Low feeling of self-worth; feeling no one cares
- Lack of pleasure or happiness in anything at all
- Declining schoolwork
- Drastically-changed eating habits
- Sleeping problems
- Tiredness, lack of energy
- Withdrawal from others
- Hopelessness

### Common events that trigger suicidal thoughts

- Family crisis; problems with parents or other family members
- Problems in relationship with the opposite sex
- School failure
- Police or court involvement
- Death or divorce of parents
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Illness or injury

### Motives for suicide

- Grief; hurtful loss
- Abandonment
- Final cry for help
- Revenge on survivors
- Avoid punishment
- Seek better conditions
- Gain attention
- Experience excitement; suicidal games

### CRITICAL warning signs

- Schoolwork slides massively
- Increased alcohol/drug use
- Neglecting personal hygiene
- Anti-social, wanting to be alone



## Overcoming Suicide

***Know the warning/watch signs.***

***Be available.***

Your friends need to know they can talk to you.

***Be a listener.***

Your friends need an outlet to pour out what is inside. They want someone who will listen. Ask a few questions so you can gain a clear picture of what they are facing.

***When it is time to speak, say:***

- "I'm here to help in any way I can. What can I do for you?"
- "Sometimes there are no easy answers, and it feels like nobody could ever understand—and maybe they can't—but there are people who care about you and want to help you. I'll help you find them."

***Don't say:***

- "I know how you feel."
- "Be happy for what you have. It could be worse."

***Don't make light of your friend's feelings.***

***Encourage them...***

...to be actively involved in activities and relationships. Try to reduce the amount of "alone" time your friend has.

***Get help***

- Suicide Crisis Center ([www.suicidecrisiscenter.com](http://www.suicidecrisiscenter.com)) 1.800.784.2433
- Hope Line Network ([www.metanoia.org](http://www.metanoia.org)) 1.800.SUICIDE
- Suicide Prevention ([www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)) 1.888.7.WE.HELP
- Teen Help ([www.teenhelp.org](http://www.teenhelp.org))
- National Adolescent Suicide Hotline 1.800.621.4000
- Distress/Suicide Helpline (Canada) 1.800.232.7288

**Realize you can approach your school guidance counselor, teacher, parents, clergy or any other respected adult for help.**