



Tredyffrin/Easttown School District

Administration Offices, West Valley Business Center
940 West Valley Road, Suite 1700, Wayne, PA 19087

Phone: 610-240-1900

August 2024

Dear Families,

We write to share an enhanced program regarding depression awareness and suicide prevention which Conestoga High School will be conducting again for the 2024-25 school year.

As a proactive measure, we are offering depression awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the health wellness curriculum using information from a research-based program, the Signs of Suicide® (SOS) Prevention Program. The program has proven to be successful at increasing help seeking behaviors by students concerned about themselves or a friend. It is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration for its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts.

Our goals in presenting this course content using the SOS Prevention Program are straightforward:

- To help students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidal thoughts in themselves or a friend
- To impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- To help students know which adults in the school they can turn to for help, if they need it

Ninth grade students will take part in the SOS program during the mental health unit of their Health & Fitness course. Health teachers will deliver SOS program instruction and related follow-up discussions. A member of the school counseling team will be present during and after the lessons to collect confidential response cards voluntarily completed by students who feel that they or a friend might need help. Counseling team members will also provide immediate, confidential follow-up for any students requesting help after the SOS lessons. Parents may view any of the SOS program materials by contacting me at the email address or phone number below.

If you do not want your student to participate in the SOS program lessons in school, please contact your student's guidance counselor or Health teacher directly. If we do not hear from you, we will assume your student has permission to participate in this program.

Sincerely,
Patrick J. Gately, Ed.D.
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