



## Best Practices for SOS for Higher Ed: Suicide Prevention for Students, Faculty, and Staff

The goal of the SOS for Higher Ed program is to support our campus partners in reaching as many community members as possible with suicide prevention training and resource awareness. As you incorporate SOS for Higher Ed into your school's comprehensive approach to suicide prevention, this guide is designed to help you reach more community members and encourage program champions across campus.

### Top 10+ Tips for Engaging Your Campus

- 1. Provide SOS for Higher Ed to all community members.** When campuses provide both the student training and the faculty and staff training, you can send all community members to the same place to get the right training for their role on campus.
- 2. Incorporate SOS for Higher Ed into pre-existing initiatives.** Does your campus already run social media campaigns for suicide prevention month? Include the link for SOS for Higher Ed e-learning. Do student groups already host suicide prevention or mental wellness events? Encourage them to download the group facilitation guide and lead SOS for Higher Ed workshops at their events.
- 3. Let students lead the way.** Enlist student government and leaders from special interest groups. Student leaders may have unique perspectives about the best ways to engage their peers. They also may become your loudest champions, encouraging administration to make suicide prevention training mandatory for first year students, new member orientations for clubs, athletics, Greek Life, and more. Students and staff working together can amplify your voice when approaching decision makers.

4. **Consider key departments.** While counseling staff is well trained in suicide prevention, many staff members across student-facing roles are asking for more training. These staff can benefit from the faculty and staff training while also promoting the student training for residence life, peer leader programs, orientation, and student clubs.
5. **Enlist faculty.** Social science professors may choose to run an SOS for Higher Ed workshop in their lecture hall. Faculty across disciplines may assign the e-learning course for homework or for extra credit (students receive a certificate of completion). While their students learn, all faculty can benefit from the opportunity to review the faculty-facing training.
6. **Coordinate with existing clubs and organizations.** Your campus likely has several strong suicide prevention initiatives already running through departments, student clubs, and organizations. Work together to include SOS for Higher Ed along with other valuable strategies that are already working on campus.
7. **Look to the helping professions.** Social work, counseling, nursing, human services, ministry, psychology students would benefit from SOS for Higher Ed as part of their coursework. Faculty in these fields may consider going beyond assigning the e-learning. Students could be tasked for running peer-led workshops across campus for various student groups. Graduate students could design campus-wide initiatives as part of their internships/practicum/assistantships.
8. **Lean on marketing expertise.** SOS for Higher Ed takes a public health approach to suicide prevention. To spread the message, look to faculty, staff, and students in marketing, communications, and public health. Consider the influencers on your campus (both on social media and in real life) to break through the noise.
9. **Make it “count.” Some classes may make SOS for Higher Ed a requirement.** Likewise, departments employing students, such as Residential Life, may require the course as a condition of employment. Reach more students by requiring the course for all RAs and encouraging RAs to lead the in-person workshops in their dorms so that all students receive training.
10. **Make it local.** Offer to provide a group workshop at department or staff meetings. Use the group facilitation guide, included extension activities, and your local expertise to provide a personalized experience. Faculty and staff can then encourage students to access the student-facing course.
11. **Check your weekly report.** As more learners sign on and complete the SOS for Higher Ed course, consider how they can become ambassadors for suicide prevention. Email this group with a promotion to get 5-10 friends or colleagues to sign on. Or consider enlisting them to take the next step and become group training leaders.