

Best Practices

SOS for School Staff: Responding to Suicide Risk

1. **Provide support during and after training** for any staff member who is impacted by learning about this challenging topic. Open a virtual and/or physical space with school-based mental health staff for participants to drop in as needed.
2. **Include this training scheduled professional development days** to ensure staff can participate without added time commitments.
3. **Create buffer time in the schedule** so staff can move at their own pace. While the training is designed to take one hour, staff may want to take breaks, review content, or seek support while considering this difficult subject.
4. **Make training mandatory for all school staff.** Every adult in your school is well positioned to notice warning signs and support a student in need. Implementers receive a weekly report of training completions, while individual staff receive a certificate of completion.
5. **Schedule annual training** to keep skills sharp and maintain staff readiness. This training was recently updated to include new content, keeping it fresh for annual participants.
6. **Encourage leadership participation and endorsement** to model commitment and emphasize the importance of suicide prevention as a shared responsibility. [Sample emails](#) and [website language](#) are included for leadership to send to staff promoting the training as a priority for each school.
7. **Provide clear protocols, referral pathways, and post-training support** so staff know how to respond on your campus when a student is at risk. Include your school's suicide prevention crisis protocol ([customizable sample](#)), the SOS for School Staff [handout](#), and local resources for participants to reference throughout the school year.

8. **Align training with state and district policies** to meet legal requirements and take advantage of potential funding or resources. SOS for School Staff's one-hour module can be combined with local training or school-level guidance to meet longer training requirements.
9. **Consider completing the module in groups or during a live training session.**
With built-in feedback at every decision point, SOS for School Staff allows facilitators to project the training and complete it as a group. No train-the-trainer is necessary for this adaptation-- just share your screen and work through the content together.
10. **Provide SOS Signs of Suicide to middle and high school students** so the entire school community can work together to recognize the signs, engage in caring conversations, and connect students to the help they need.