Brief Suicidal Risk Screening Tools

School Resources to Support Military-Connected Students is a project by the Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness an applied research center at The Pennsylvania State University and is funded by the Department of Defense Education Activity Grant number HE1254-19-0009.

For more information click on the links below:

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/

https://www.psu.edu/

https://dodeagrants.org/

Our goal is to provide school personnel with free, evidence-based resources to support military-connected students. This training is part of our *Suicide Prevention* series.

Important Reminders

Before starting this training, please read the items below carefully and check the box in front of each item to indicate your understanding.

- The following content discusses suicide and may be upsetting to some individuals.
- Follow all district, local, state, and federal regulations. This training is **NOT** intended to replace or override existing procedures or laws.

Introduction

What is the purpose of this training?

Every school likely utilizes some procedure of teacher referral, and, informally or formally, sharing concerns with other school personnel. In order to reduce discrepancies between which teachers refer for what behavior and to whom, identify preferred ways of sharing information, including information about the general areas of concern and an appropriate contact person. Of course, some teachers may feel more comfortable handling certain behaviors in the classrooms than others, but, when certain warning signs are observed, they should be reported to ensure appropriate monitoring and follow-up. For example, a student known to be the victim of bullying should be assessed for hopelessness and suicidal thoughts.

Once a universal prevention program is in place and being implemented with fidelity, it is essential to include a screening and gatekeeping process that will allow all students at behavioral and emotional risk to be identified. Universal screening is not an intervention in and of itself, but identified students can be provided with targeted prevention, intervention strategies, or programs based on the MTSS framework. Within the context of suicide prevention, students who are considered at risk for internalizing behaviors such as depression, anxiety, hopelessness, and withdrawal, may be considered at risk for suicidal ideation or attempts.

Objective

The goal of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Identify a validated brief screening tool to use when a student may be experiencing suicidal ideation.

How confident are you in your ability to do this now?

Please click on the link below to submit your response.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Gp3iBHlvhcTluR?modulenumber=suicide16

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below before proceeding with this training.

Answered the survey question in the link.
Clicked the arrow underneath the survey question to submit your response.
Recorded the ID number provided after you submitted your answer to the survey question. You will need it to complete the survey at the end of this training.

Research

What is most important for me to know?

Regardless of the identification method, it is important that students who are identified as potentially at risk for self-harm receive immediate attention from school staff and, if a risk assessment is conducted, that parents receive notification in a timely manner. Students at risk should be given a suicide-specific screening tool. Below are several brief suicidal risk screening tools that may warrant consideration for use in your school.

You will be able to download each of the tools later in this training.

Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Suicide Risk Screening Tool

It is recommended that for students identified as at risk for self-harm, schools follow up with the Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Suicide Risk Screening Tool (see below). The ASQ consists of four items that clearly ask about suicidal ideation and past attempts. When used in a sample of 10- to 21-year-old individuals, the ASQ had sensitivity of 96.9% (95% CI, 91.3- 99.4) and specificity of 87.6% (95% CI, 84.0-90.5).

The ASQ should be administered in person with a qualified school faculty member that allows for immediate follow up. Validation of any of the four items would indicate suicide risk and an immediate referral to the mental health professional in your school who is designed to complete the full risk assessment.

Click on the link below to access the ASQ Suicide Risk Screening Tool.

https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials/index.shtml

Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS)

For school systems that prefer to use a different suicide screening measure, the Columbia- Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) supports suicide risk assessment. Many versions of the C-SSRS are available; for screening purposes, there is a six-item version of the C-SSRS to assess suicidal ideation and behavior over recent months. Students deemed at risk for suicide or self-harm based on responses to the C-SSRS should immediately be referred to a school- based mental health provider for risk assessment.

Click on the link below to access the Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale.

https://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/cssrs-for-communities-and-healthcare/#filter=.general-use.english

Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS)

Finally, the Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS) is available as a 6-item screening tool (see Figure 4) that targets a range of concerns from low-risk (e.g., sadness, irritability, and sleep difficulties) to high risk (e.g., thoughts,

plans, or actions about suicide or self-harm). This might be more relevant for a student who is identified based on circumstantial risk factors like bullying. Similar to the ASQ, the KADS should be administered in person with a qualified school member—such as a school psychologist, counselor, nurse, or someone trained to administer this type of screening—to allow for immediate follow up. Students deemed at risk for suicide or self-harm based on KADS by endorsing the final item should immediately be referred to a school-based mental health provider for risk assessment.

Click on the link below to access the Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS)

http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/6-KADS.pdf

Additional Tools and Recommendations

Students who are not deemed at risk for self-harm or suicide should be referred to student support personnel (such as school psychologists or counselors) for any additional data collection required to determine an appropriate Tier 2 targeted prevention or intervention plan.

When responding to a potential crisis or first aid situation, parent permission is not required. More information about the legal and ethical implications of confidentiality can be reviewed by clicking the button below to view the training titled *Student Confidentiality and Parental Rights.*

Go to *Student Confidentiality and Parental Rights*

Click on the link below to navigate to the training titled *Student Confidentiality and Parental Rights.* The objective of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to balance student confidentiality and parental right to know what is happening with their child.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_14-student-confidentiality-and-parental-rights_201022/

Students who are deemed at-risk based on the screening results should be physically escorted to a mental health professional in the building for a formal risk assessment.

Reflective listening should be utilized when conducting risk assessments. More information about the OARS reflective listening strategy can be reviewed by clicking the button below to view the training titled *Student Confidentiality and Parental Rights.*

Go to *Reflective Listening in Times of Crisis*

Click on the link below to navigate to the training titled *Reflective Listening in Times of Crisis.* The objective of this training is to increase your confidence in your ability to effectively utilize motivational interviewing techniques with students in times of crisis.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_13-reflective-listening-in-times-of-crisis_201022/

Application

How might this look in my professional practice?

The goal of this training is to:

Identify a validated brief screening tool to use when a student may be experiencing suicidal ideation.

Based on your review of the brief screening tools, which of the following do you feel meet the unique needs of your school? Considerations may include the age of your students, training required, current level of training, existing materials, etc. If necessary, click the link(s) to navigate to an external website to learn more about each tool.

- Ask Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ) Suicide Risk Screening Tool - https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq-toolkit-materials/index.shtml

- Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale (C-SSRS) - https://cssrs.columbia.edu/the-columbia-scale-c-ssrs/cssrs-for-communities-and-healthcare/#filter%3D.general-use.english
- Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (KADS) - http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/6-KADS.pdf

Implementation

How can I effectively implement this content in my professional practice?

Please review the considerations below regarding potential implementation strategies, barriers to implementation, and collaboration strategies related to this content. This will help you coordinate the next steps as you begin to incorporate the information presented in this training into your professional practice.

This information can also be found on a handout that you will be able to download at the end of this training.

Implementation Strategies

- Complete any and all training necessary when implementing these screening tools.
- Ensure and engage support from all stakeholders including parents, administrators, teachers, and community members before embarking on new procedures for screening and assessment.
- Be sure that you have forms easily accessible and ready for use in the event of working with an at-risk student.

Overcoming Barriers to Implementation

- Engage in ongoing communication with stakeholders about potential intervention options in the event of a risk-assessment, why they are important, and what they can do to help support your efforts.
- When making referrals to outside agencies or providers, it is helpful if they have advanced notice and a relationship with the school. Consider having regular check-ins with local agencies and providers, such as lunch or a meeting every school year, to review procedures and get their input on how they would like to proceed with referrals.

Collaboration Strategies

- Engage parents and community members to rally ongoing support.
- Regularly consult with and coach teachers and other staff when implementing procedures.

Resources

Are there any resources available to help me implement this content?

Click on the link below to download a tool that you can use to implement this content in your professional practice.

https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:1c36ecd2-2dee-4dbb-9c87-fb207286a59d

Feedback

How can I help improve this training?

The objective of this training was to increase your confidence in your ability to:

Identify a validated brief screening tool to use when a student may be experiencing suicidal ideation.

Answer the questions in the link below to let us know how well this training increased your confidence in your ability to accomplish this objective. Once you have answered all of the questions, click the blue arrow button underneath to submit your responses.

https://pennstate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d771mLr9ZgW3kyx?modulenumber=suicide16

Verify that you have completed each of the tasks below.

Answered all of the survey questions above. You may have to scroll to see all of the questions.
Clicked the arrow underneath the last survey question to submit your responses.

Additional Readings

Where can I learn more about this content?

The following resources were used to create this training. If you would like more information about the information presented in this training, we encourage you to start here.

The Columbia Lighthouse Project. (n.d.). Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale. Retrieved from https://cssrs.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/C-SSRS- Screener-with-Triage-Points-for-Schools-2018-2.docx

Erbacher, Terri & Singer, Jonathan & Poland, Scott. (2015). Suicide in schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention.

Kutcher, S. (2008). 6-ITEM Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale: KADS. Retrieved from http://teenmentalhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/6- KADS.pdf

National Institute of Mental Health: ASQ Suicide Risk Screening (n.d). Retrieved from https://www.nimh.nih.gov/research/research-conducted-at-nimh/asq- toolkit-materials/asq-tool/screening_tool_asq_nimh_toolkit_155867.pdf

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this training. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at schoolresources@psu.edu.

Proceed to the next training

Click on the link below to move on to the next training titled *Full Suicidal Risk Screening Tool*. In this training, you will increase your confidence in your ability to conduct a suicidal risk screening on a studen that is experiencing suicidal ideation.

https://learning.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/school-resources/modules/suicide_17-full-suicidal-risk-screening-tool_201022/

Return to the module directory

Click on this button to return to the module directory.

https://schoolresources.militaryfamilies.psu.edu/modules/