

# Safe Texas Schools: Suicide & Bullying Prevention

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# Suicide Prevention Best Practices in Texas

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**The Department of State Health Services oversees:**

- **39 Community Mental Health Centers statewide**
- **Regional Centers with Suicide Prevention Coordinators, Crisis Centers, Hotlines**
- **School Health Network**
- **Educational Service Centers – School Health Specialists**

# Suicide Prevention Best Practices in Texas

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## **TRAINING:**

- **At-Risk Avatar training for High School / College**
  - best practice registry
  - **FREE self-navigated 1 hour class online**
  
- **NEW At-Risk training for Middle School faculty**
  
- **ASK Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training**
  - **Smartphone App**
  - **1<sup>st</sup> in the world**
  - **10,000 people trained**

# Suicide Prevention Best Practices in Texas

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## State Suicide Prevention Council

- **Infrastructure for statewide suicide prevention**
- **29 statewide coalitions supported**
- **Over 21 statewide agencies**
- **Updating Texas State Suicide Prevention Plan**

# Risk Factors

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Risk Factors are stressful events, situations, or conditions in a person's life that may increase the likelihood of attempting or dying by suicide.

# Risk Factors: Bio-Psycho-Social

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## Biological & Psychological:

- **Mental Illness**
- **Substance Abuse**
- **Hopelessness**
- **Impulsive or Aggressive**
- **Trauma/Abuse/**Bullying****
- **Major Physical Illness**
- **Family history of suicide**
- **Pre-existing vulnerability  
(obese, GLBTQ, awkward,  
G&T ...)**
- **Previous Suicide Attempt**



# Risk Factors: Social-Cultural

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## **Social – Cultural--**

- Isolation and lack of social support (Bullying, GLBT, G&T, Obese, others)
- Stigma to seeking help (men, rural, military, law enforcement, others)
- Barriers to health and mental health care
- Cultural and/or religious beliefs that normalize suicide.

# Risk Factors: Environmental

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- Loss (Job or Financial)
- Loss (Relationship)
- Easy access to lethal means
- Exposure to clusters of suicide.



# Risk Factors: Mental and Addictive Disorders

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Note: Biological & Psychological Factors, include--

- Mental and addictive disorders, often co-occurring, as the most powerful risk factors for suicide in all age groups
- Mental or addictive disorders are thought to be present in at least 90 percent of all completed suicides.
- Bipolar and schizophrenia are two disorders that have been found to have particularly strong associations with suicidal behavior.

# Protective Factors

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- “Protective factors are the positive conditions, personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential for suicide as well as other high-risk behaviors.”



# Youth Risk Behavior Survey

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- Biennial survey public high school students
- All self reported data (no measurements)
- Participation is voluntary on every level
- Parental consent is required
- Students/Schools/Districts are all anonymous

*\* Date from : Jennifer Haussler Garing, MS, Center for Health Statistics, DSHS, 12/7/ 2011 Powerpoint, "Adolescent Suicide: Results from the 2011 Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey."*

# Suicide Module in YRBS

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- During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for **two weeks or more in a row** that you stopped doing some usual activities?
- ... did you ever **seriously** consider attempting suicide?
- ... did you make a plan about how you would attempt suicide?
- During the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt suicide?
  - **Analyze looking at 1 or more times**
  - **Students can respond up to ‘6 or more times’**
- **If you attempted suicide** during the past 12 months, did any attempt result in an injury, poisoning, or overdose that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?

*\* Date from : Jennifer Haussler Garing, MS, Center for Health Statistics, DSHS, 12/7/ 2011 Powerpoint, “Adolescent Suicide: Results from the 2011 Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey.”*

Almost 1 in 3  
students felt  
depressed in the  
past 12 months

More than 1 in 6  
students considered  
suicide

More than 1 in 7  
made a plan to  
commit suicide

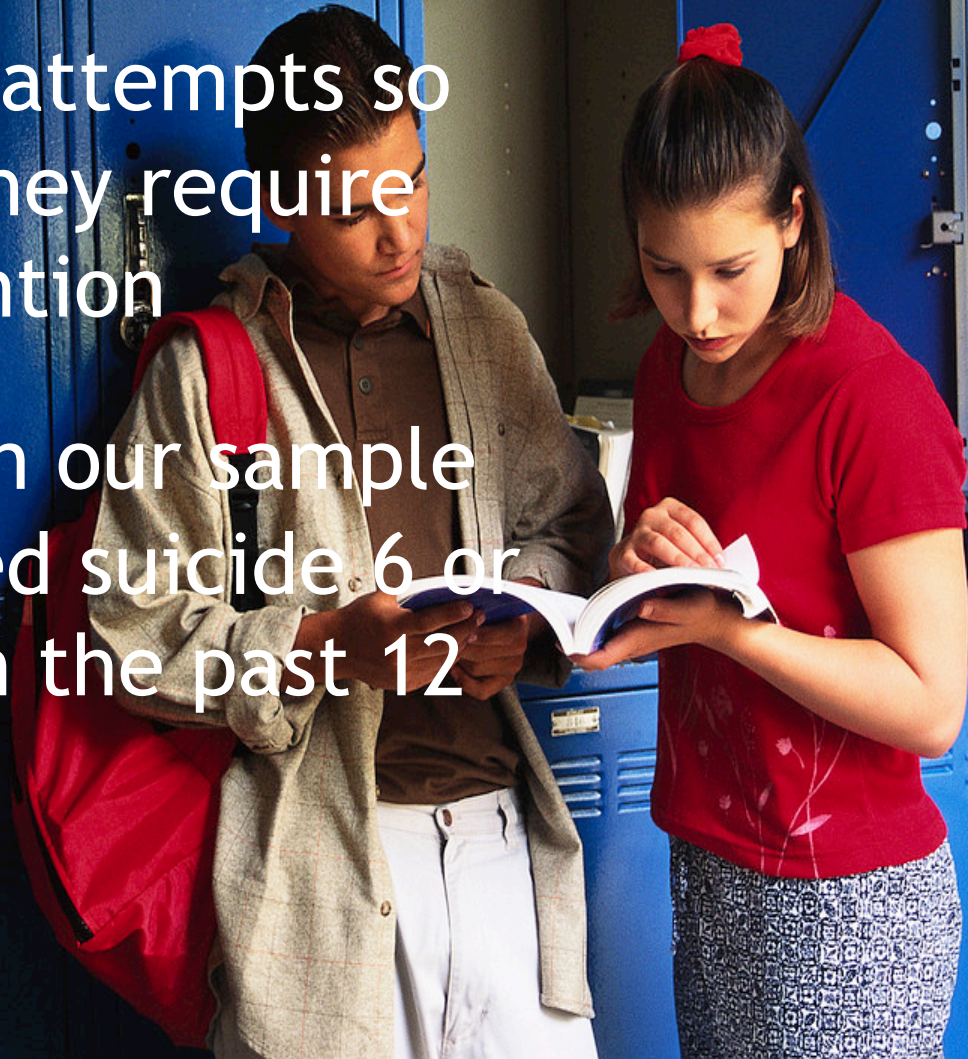
Texas 2011



More than 1 in 10 students  
actually attempt suicide

1 in 50 make attempts so  
severe that they require  
medical attention

33 students in our sample  
had attempted suicide 6 or  
more times in the past 12  
months



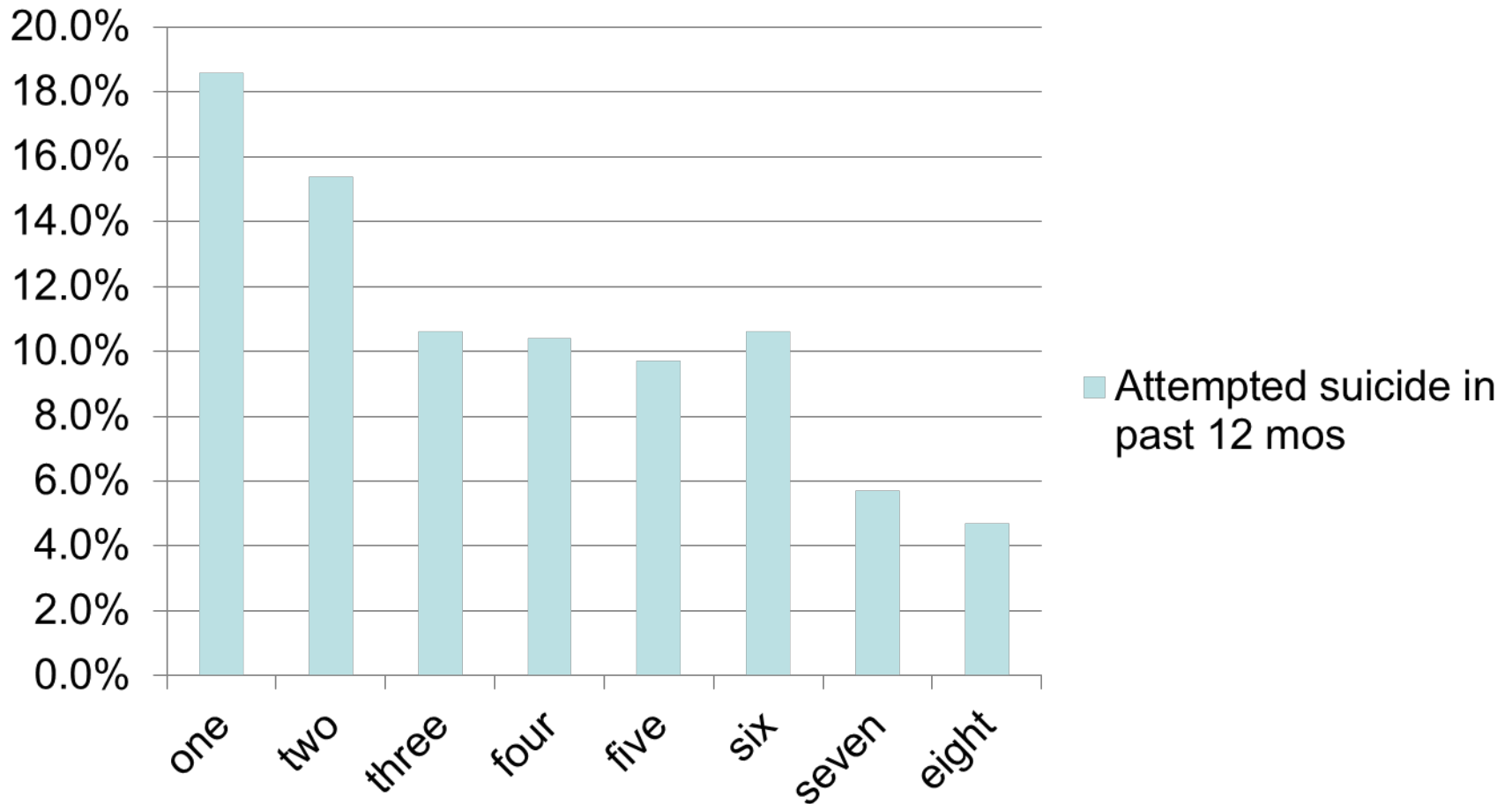
# YRBS Bullying Questions

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- **The next 2 questions ask about bullying. Bullying is when 1 or more students tease, threaten, spread rumors about, hit, shove, or hurt another student over and over again. It is not bullying when 2 students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or tease each other in a friendly way.**
- **23. During the past 12 months, have you ever been bullied on school property?**
- **24. During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied? (Include being bullied through e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, Web sites, or texting.)**

*\* Date from : Jennifer Haussler Garing, MS, Center for Health Statistics, DSHS, 12/7/ 2011 Powerpoint, "Adolescent Suicide: Results from the 2011 Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey."*

# Attempted Suicide in Past 12 months by Number of Assets



\* Date from : Jennifer Haussler Garing, MS, Center for Health Statistics, DSHS, 12/7/ 2011 Powerpoint, "Adolescent Suicide: Results from the 2011 Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey."



# YRBS “Take Away”

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- YRBS shows that when one or more protective factors are in place then the likeliness of suicide is decreased
- Importance of Connectedness: **feeling connected** is one of the most important protective factors according to CDC
- Do you agree or disagree that in your community you feel like you matter to people?
  - **48% Did not feel like they matter**

# Suicide Prevention State Legislation HB 1386

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## Policy:

- House Bill 1386 passed in the 82nd Legislative Session 2011
- "AN ACT relating to the public health threat presented by youth suicide and the qualification of certain persons serving as marriage and family therapists in school districts."

# Suicide Prevention State Legislation HB 1386

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## What does the law say about Texas School District-Level Planning and Decision-Making?

- Each school district shall have a district improvement plan that is developed, evaluated, and revised annually, in accordance with district policy, by the superintendent with the assistance of the district-level committee (Section 11.251 Texas Education Code)
- The district improvement plan must include strategies for improvement of student performance that include methods for addressing the needs of students for special programs, including suicide prevention programs (Texas Education Code §11.252 (a)(3)(B))

# Suicide Prevention State Legislation HB 1386

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## Where can I find a copy of the Best Practice Based List?

The list of approved best practices and programs for suicide prevention in public schools in Texas is located at the following website under the “resources” link:

[www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org](http://www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org)

Suicide Prevention Resource Center’s Best Practice Registry:

[www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

Specific instructions are located at:

<http://www2.sprc.org/bpr/index>

# Suicide Prevention State Legislation HB 1386



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC). At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Suicide Prevention Basics, News & Events, Training Institute, Best Practices Registry, Library & Resources, and Other Web Tools. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

The main content area features a large banner for the "Campus Planning Guide now available". Below this, there are several featured articles and resources:

- Professionals Providing Social Services:** Resources and information for professionals in various settings, including community and organizations.
- Health & Behavioral Health Care Providers:** Information on how providers can play a role in identifying and helping individuals at risk.
- Director's Blog:** A blog by the Director of the Texas Department of State Health Services, focusing on suicide prevention.
- SAHMHA Youth Suicide Prevention Guidelines:** Resources for youth suicide prevention, including a guide for providers.
- Native & Communities:** Information on how to provide culturally sensitive care to Native and community populations.
- Colleges & Universities:** Resources for colleges and universities, including a guide for campus safety.
- The Weekly Spark:** A weekly newsletter providing updates on suicide prevention.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with contact information and logos for EDC and SAMHSA.

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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### Are there sample District Plans with sample Suicide Prevention Plans that I can view?

- Yes, samples from variety of urban, rural, small and large public schools:

[www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org](http://www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org)

- Free Toolkit “Coming Together to Care: Community Toolkit for Prevention and Postvention in Texas” located at:

[www.TexasSuicidePrevnetion.org](http://www.TexasSuicidePrevnetion.org)

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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### Where can I find a list of recommended early mental health intervention?

- The list of approved best practices and best practice based programs and curriculum for early mental health intervention in public schools in Texas can be found at the National Registry for Evidence-Based Programs and Practices at the following website:

[www.nrepp.samhsa.gov](http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov)

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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## Resources

- **Links to the State and National Toolkits**

  - Texas**

  - [www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org](http://www.TexasSuicidePrevention.org)

  - National - After a Suicide: Toolkit for Schools**

  - <http://www.sprc.org/library/AfteraSuicideToolkitforSchools.pdf>

- **Copy of American Association of Suicidology Guidelines for Schools**

  - [www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

- **Research-Based Guidelines and Practices for School-Based Suicide Prevention, D. Kimokeo, 2006**

  - [http://ican-ncfr.org/documents/Schoold\\_Suicide.pdf](http://ican-ncfr.org/documents/Schoold_Suicide.pdf)

- **School Suicide Prevention Accreditation, American Association of Suicidology** <http://SPRC.ORG/sites/sprc.org/>





# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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- **How will DSHS and TEA find out what School Districts have a suicide prevention plan as part of their District Plan and what schools do not?**
  - **Texas Education Association annual survey**
    - **School Health Survey**
      - **Questions about Suicide Prevention added 2011**

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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### TEA Survey Question:

- “Has your school district implemented a policy, program or practice as a result of a School Health Advisory Committee recommendation?”
  - 1300 total school districts in Texas
  - 527 answered the question
  - 58 answered “yes”
  - 10.9 % response rate



# **Suicide Prevention State Legislation HB 1386**

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**58 school districts have suicide prevention policy, program or practice as result of a SHAC recommendation**

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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### TEA Survey Question:

- **“Of the following, which topics were addressed on your district's website and/or handbook?”**
  - Suicide Prevention on **Website 62.3% (230)**
  - Suicide Prevention in **handbook 85.4% (315)**

# Suicide Prevention

## State Legislation HB 1386

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TEA Survey Question:

- **Indicate if your district staff attends or needs training or staff development on any of the following topics:**
  - **Suicide Prevention**
    - Attends Training now: 75.4% (361)
    - Needs Training: 30.9% (148)



# Suicide Prevention

## TEA School Health Survey

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TEA Survey Question: **Does your district bullying policy include specific information on the following (mark all that apply):**

- Bullying based on gender :77.1% (525)
- Bullying based on race/ethnicity 76.2% (519)
- Bullying based on sexual orientation/identity 67.1% (457)
- Bullying based on physical characteristics 72.4% (493)
- Cyberbullying **82.5% (562)**

# Suicide Prevention TEA Survey

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TEA Survey Question:

- **Does your school district integrate bullying prevention education in one or more of its required subject areas?**
  - **YES 77.9% (511)**
  - **NO 1.5% (10)**

# Suicide Prevention TEA Survey

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TEA Survey Question:

- **Does your district notify the parent/guardian of a child who is the victim of bullying?**
  - **YES: 98.7% (672)**
  - **NO: 1.5% (10)**



# Suicide Prevention TEA Survey

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TEA Survey Question:

- **Of the following health-related topics, which are addressed in each of your district's campus improvement plans?**

	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
▪ <b>Bullying Prevention</b>	<b>96.6% (568)</b>	<b>89.8% (528)</b>	<b>86.2% (507)</b>
▪ <b>Bullying Intervention</b>	<b>94.6% (477)</b>	<b>87.9% (443)</b>	<b>86.3% (435)</b>