

# WHAT PARENTS AND GUARDIANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SUICIDE PREVENTION IN OUR SCHOOLS

**Henry Hudson Regional School**

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**Welcome: Lenore M. Kingsmore,  
Principal**



**Lifelines**  
*A Suicide Prevention Program*

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# 5 Important Things Parents and Guardians Need to Know

**Why Youth Suicide  
Prevention is  
Important**

**How to Recognize  
Warning Signs**

**What your School is  
Doing For  
Prevention**

**What are Protective  
Factors & How to  
Foster Them**

**What to do if You  
are Worried about  
Your Child**

# **Why Youth Suicide Prevention is Important**

- 1. 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death 10-24 year olds**
- 2. Rate increasing for 5-11 year olds**
- 3. Dramatic increase in attempts in 10-14 year old girls**
- 4. Prevention DOES work!**

BUT...

Can't talking  
about suicide  
plant the idea in  
the minds of  
vulnerable youth?

AND I'VE  
HEARD...

That talking about  
suicide is just a  
way to get  
attention

IS IT SAFE...

To talk about  
suicide in the  
school?



AT LEAST 30%  
OF YOUTH WILL  
TELL SOMEONE  
ELSE



# Understanding Suicide Better

**A behavioral definition puts suicide into words that are easy to understand:**

**Suicide is an attempt to solve a problem of intense emotional pain with impaired problem-solving skills**

# How to Recognize Warning Signs

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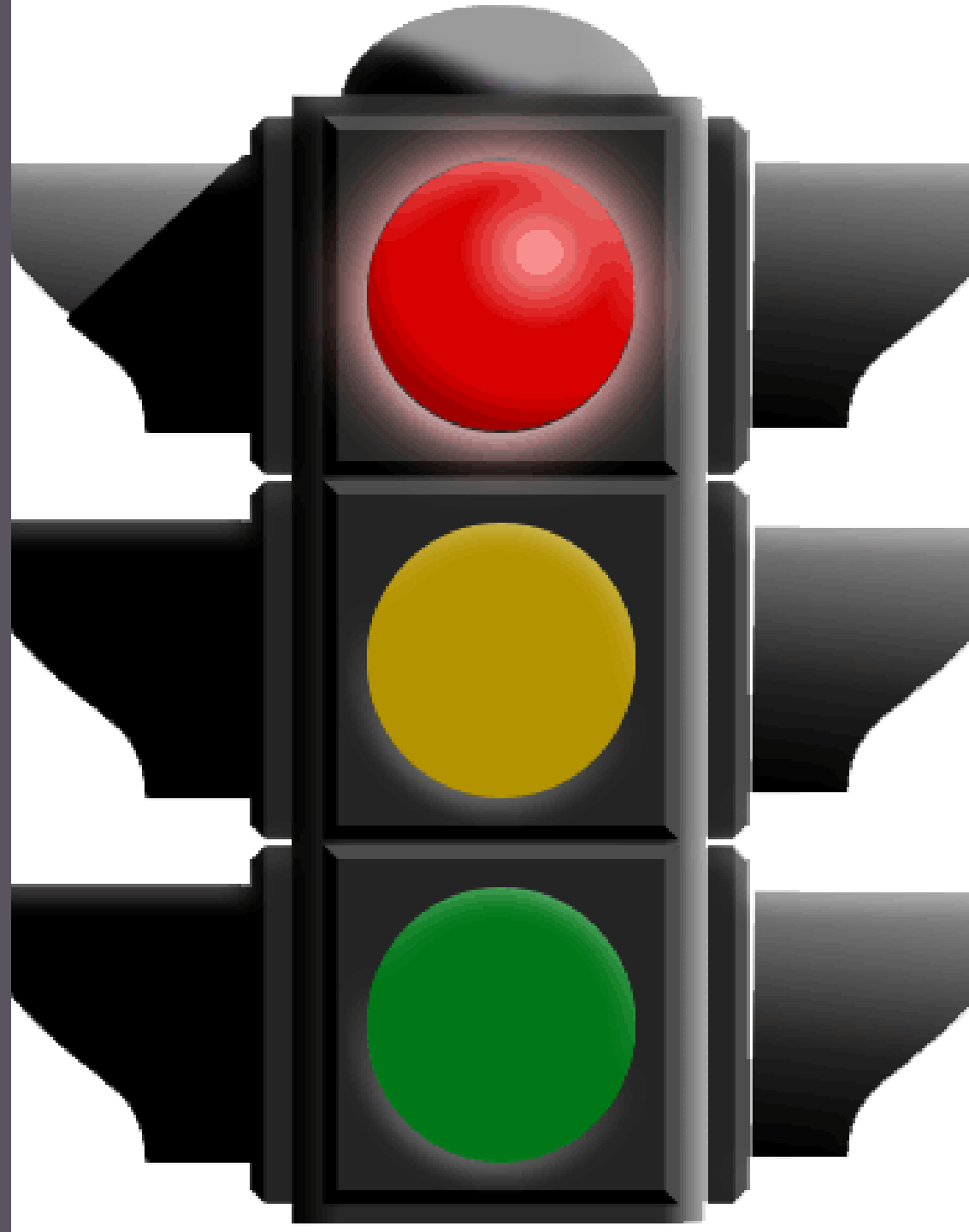
**Red - Warning**

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**Amber - Risk**

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**Green – Protective Factors**



**Risk Factors:**  
traits, attributes,  
characteristics or  
other variables associated  
with increased risk for suicide  
or suicidal behavior

- **Family history of suicide**
- **Mental health diagnosis**
- **Previous attempt**
- **Being exposed to a peer's death**
- **Access to lethal means**

# Warning Signs: FACTS

- **Feelings**
- **Actions**
- **Changes**
- **Threats /talk**
- **Situations**

# **WARNING SIGNS YOU MAY NOTICE AT HOME**

- **Changes in appearance**
- **Changes in mood, for example, no longer cheerful or suddenly cheerful**
- **Increased irritability**
- **Changes in eating habits**
- **Loss of interest in activities**
- **Bullying behavior- even as a bystander**
- **Somatic complaints**
- **Actual threats or suicide notes**
- **Concerns expressed by peers**

# What Your School is Doing for Prevention: The Lifelines Trilogy

- Comprehensive
- Evidence-based
- Uses public health prevention model
- Sustainable



Lifelines  
A Suicide Prevention Program

# Prevention Goals



**Everyone in the school community will:**

- Know warning signs**
- Be able to identify students with warning signs**
- Make effective referrals**

# The Scope of Training in Your School

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The faculty who will teach the prevention curriculum and school counselors were trained on the curriculum and its implementation.

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All school staff receive a training on suicide awareness and prevention.

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All parents/guardians receive a training on suicide awareness and prevention.

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Students participate in a Suicide Prevention Curriculum.



# Instructional Objectives

## Students Will:

- Recognize the threat of suicidal thoughts and behavior and take troubled peers seriously
- Know relevant facts about suicide, including warning signs
- Demonstrate positive attitudes about intervention and help-seeking behavior
- Know how to respond to troubled peers
- Know resources: be able to name one adult and know how resources will respond

**Lifelines Prevention  
Curriculum  
Principle Takeaways**

**Social Connection**

**Help-Seeking**

**Knowing how to  
access in school  
resources**

# What the Curriculum Looks Like

Four, 45 minute lessons students learn once between 7th – 10th grade

- **FACTS**
- **Intervention Steps**
- **Identify Helpful People**
- **Learn School Resources**

Two, 45 minutes lessons students learn once in 11th or 12th grade

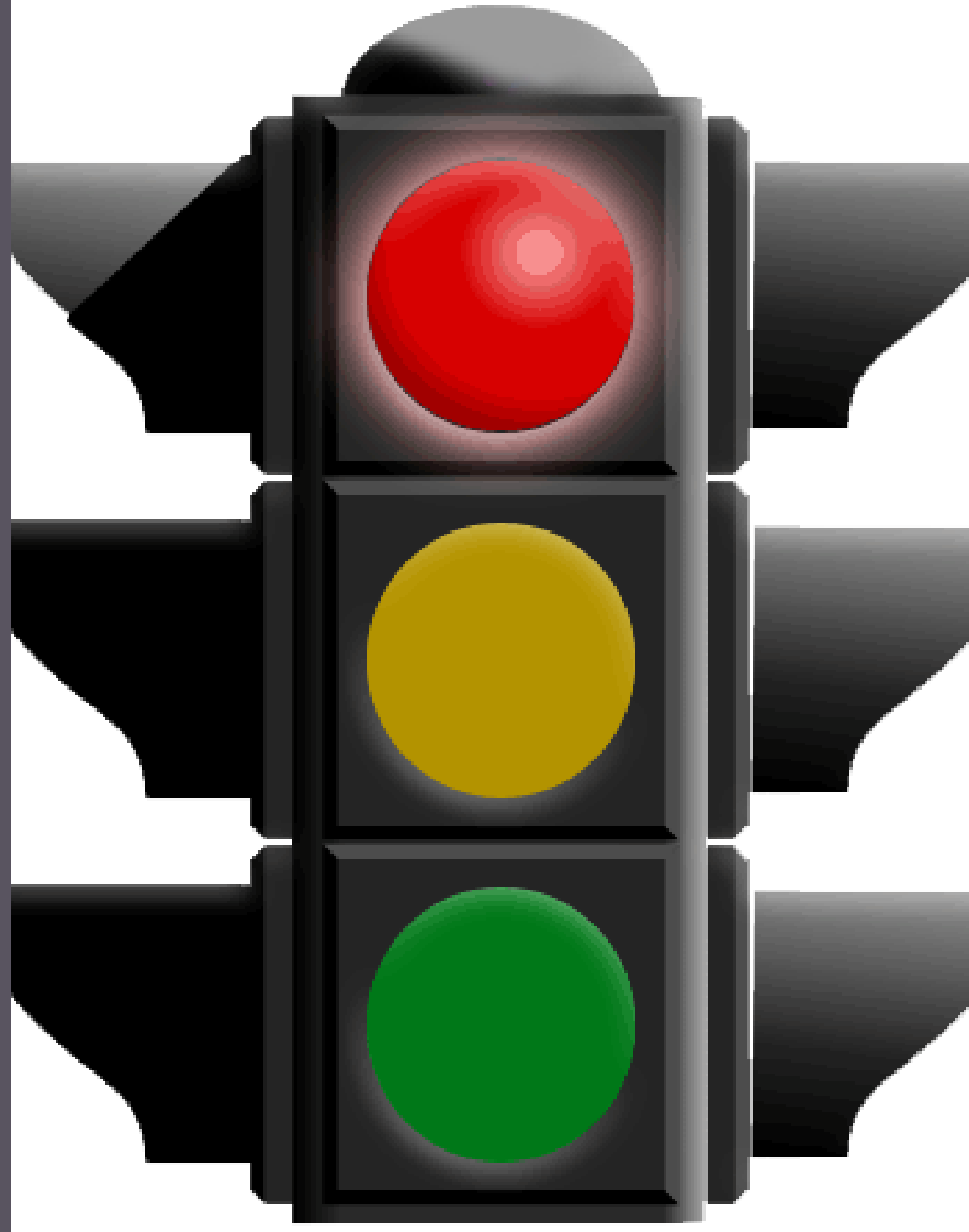
- **Review Intervention Steps**
- **Transition After High School: expectations and assumptions**
- **Support System**

# The Importance of Trusted Adults

- Curriculum designed to help students identify Trusted Adults in their lives whom they can turn to for support
- Students name the qualities they look for in helpful/trusted adults
- Students encouraged to name at least two trusted adults

# What are “Protective Factors” and How do We Foster them?

Personal, behavioral, or situational characteristics that contribute to resiliency and serve as a buffer against risk



# Protective Factors for Youth

- **Contact with a caring adult!\***
- Sense of connection
- Positive self-esteem and good coping skills
- Access to care for emotional/physical problems, substance abuse
- Cultural/religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote self-preservation

# Fostering Protective Factors: For Parents



# ***How To Be a Partner in Prevention***

- **Be an advocate!**
- **Become educated about youth suicide, especially in your area**
- **Be alert to what's going on with teens in your community**
- **Be nosey- ask about rumors or gossip- monitor the internet**
- **Monitor behavior, especially alcohol use**
- **Know your resources!**
- **If your child needs mental health services, be an educated consumer**
- **Stay concerned and FOLLOW UP!**



WHAT TO DO IF  
YOU'RE WORRIED  
ABOUT YOUR CHILD?

# ***How To Talk With Your Kids & Listen to Their Answers***

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Ask	Ask your kids what they think/feel about suicide
LISTEN	LISTEN to the answer
Don't disagree	Don't disagree with them or minimize what they tell you
Use	If you hear anything that concerns you, use the 3 magic words: TELL ME MORE
Be	Be prepared to take action IMMEDIATELY

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# *Local Resources*



QUESTIONS?

