



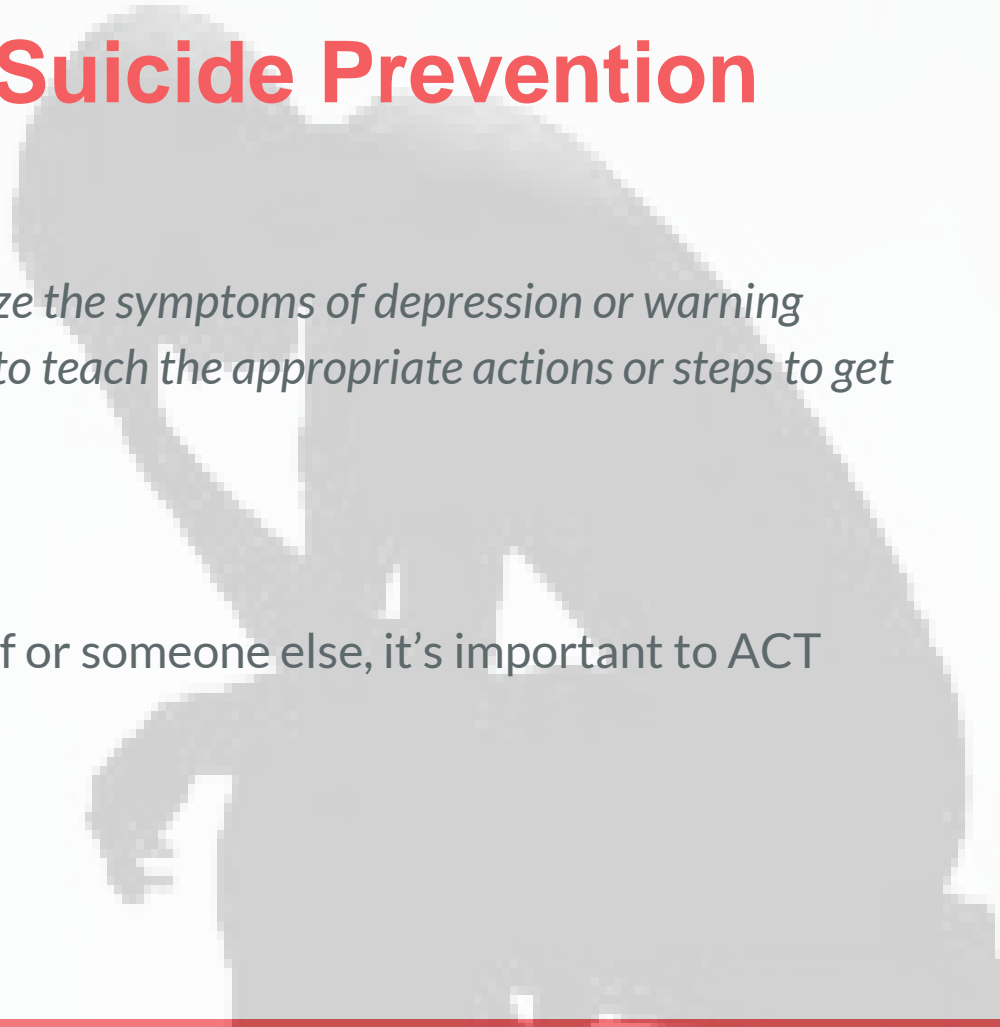
*Recognizing and Responding to Signs in Ourselves or Others*

# Purpose of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program

*To help students and trusted adults recognize the symptoms of depression or warning signs of suicide in themselves or others and to teach the appropriate actions or steps to get help*

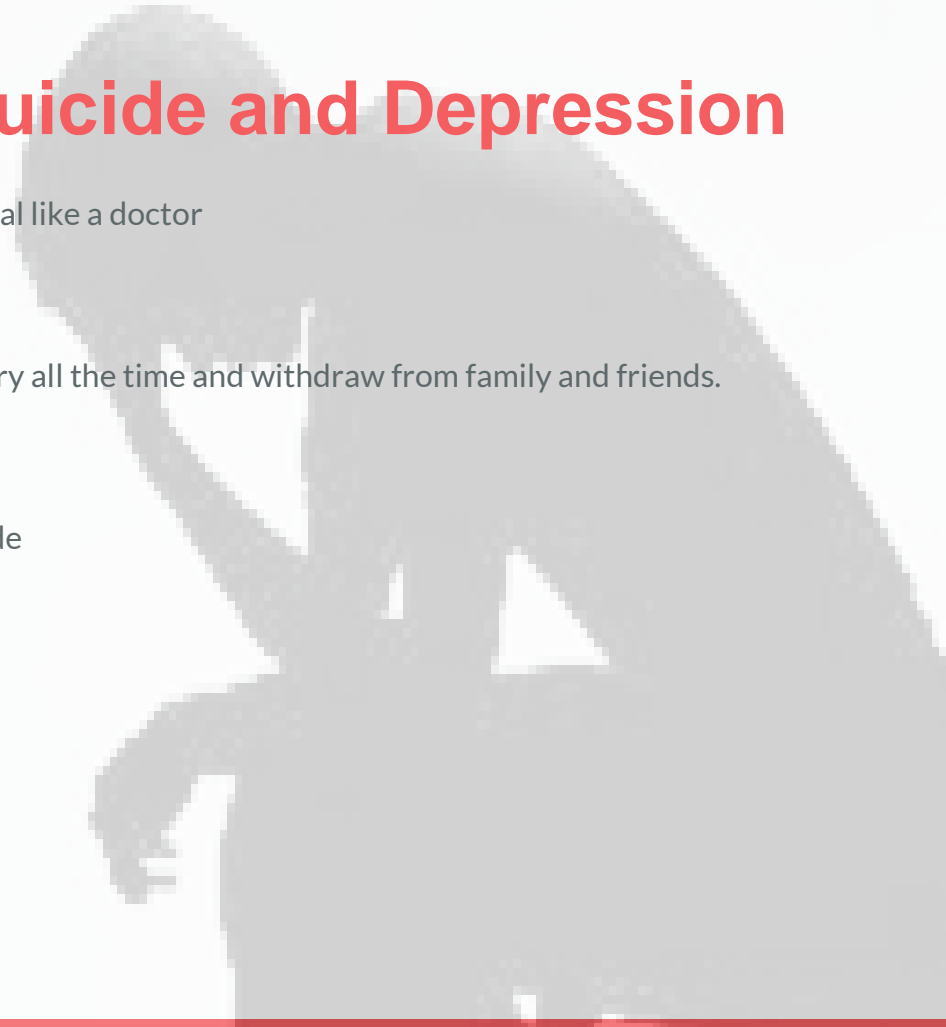
## ACT

- If a friend talks about hurting himself or someone else, it's important to ACT
- Acknowledge, Care, Tell



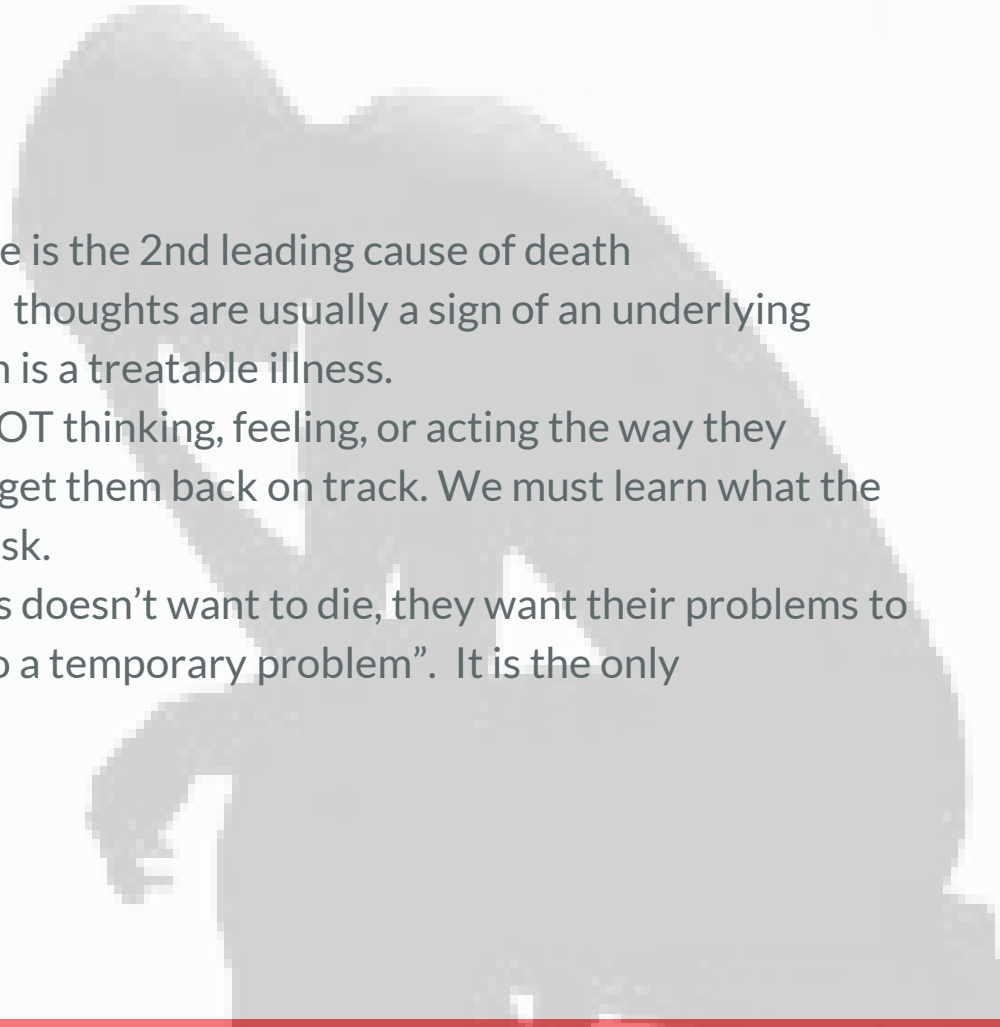
# Myths and Facts about Suicide and Depression

- Depression is an illness that can be treated by a professional like a doctor
  - **FACT**
- It's easy to tell when someone is depressed because they cry all the time and withdraw from family and friends.
  - **MYTH**
- Teens who use drugs and alcohol are more at risk for suicide
  - **FACT**
- Talking about suicide can give someone the idea
  - **MYTH**
- People who talk about suicide won't really do it
  - **MYTH**



# Facts about Suicide

- Among young people aged 15-24, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death
- Teenage suicide is preventable. Suicidal thoughts are usually a sign of an underlying mental illness, such as depression, which is a treatable illness.
- When a person is depressed, they are NOT thinking, feeling, or acting the way they normally do. We must get them help, to get them back on track. We must learn what the warning signs are and who is at higher risk.
- A person who is having suicidal thoughts doesn't want to die, they want their problems to stop. Suicide is a "permanent solution to a temporary problem". It is the only "irreversible choice".



# Risk Factors



*While no student is immune from suicide, some face increased risk and generally a number of factors come together to increase risk...*

- **Behavioral health** - mental health, depression, non-suicidal self injury, substance abuse, side effects to medication
- **Personal characteristics** - low self esteem, hopelessness, social isolation, poor problem-solving, gender identity/ sexual orientation concerns
- **Adverse life circumstances** - bullying, abuse, exposure to peer suicide, interpersonal difficulties, relationship problems); living in outside-of-the home situation; living with medical conditions/ disabilities
- **Family characteristics** - family history of mental illness, substance abuse, suicide of family member, parental divorce, lack of family acceptance (LGBTQ issues)
- **Environment** - stigma over mental health issues, access to lethal means, lack of access to mental health care

# Warning Signs



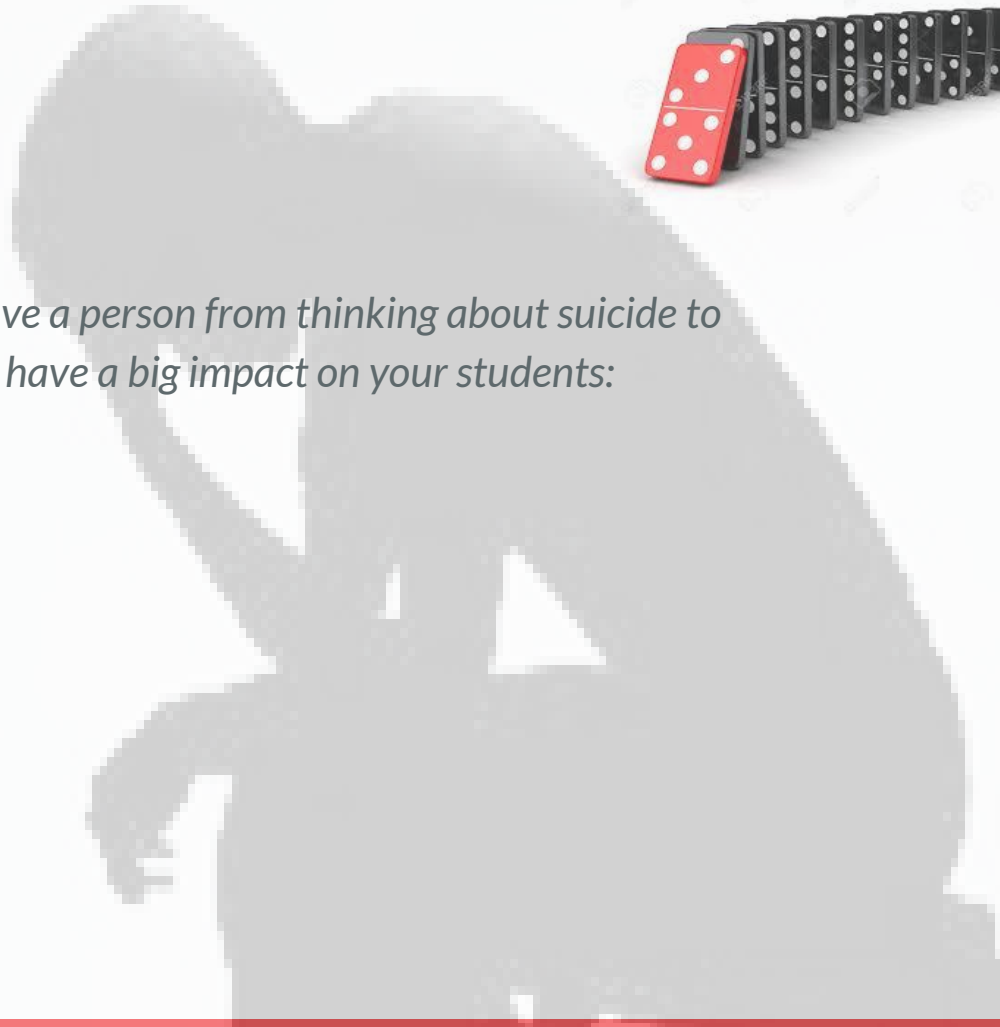
*A warning sign is an indication that someone might be having thoughts of suicide. Most people give clues or signals of their intentions.*

- **Listen:** talking about death ... “I wish I were dead” ; talking about unbearable pain or no hope for the future; talking about hurting themselves or others
- **Read:** writing assignments, social media, etc. writing about death, etc
- **Watch:** look for big changes in appearance, mood swings, irritability, anxiousness, extreme withdrawal, trouble sleeping, increase in risky behavior, decreased interest in things they once enjoyed

# Precipitating Event

*Sometimes a recent life event can “trigger” or move a person from thinking about suicide to attempting suicide. Consider what events might have a big impact on your students:*

- breakup
- bullying incident
- sudden death of a loved one
- trouble at school



# Protective Factors



*Protective factors are individual traits or environmental situations that can reduce suicidal behavior*

- **Individual characteristics**- positive self esteem, healthing coping strategies, spiritual faith, ability to let of of a situation and not get upset
- **Family/ other support** - feeling supported, connected, validated, heard, and understood by family and friends
- **School** - supportive teachers and peers, feeling safe and connected, overall positive place to want to be at
- **Mental health and healthcare**
- **Restricted access to means** such as firearms, medications, alcohol, and drugs





# ACT- Acknowledge, Care, Tell

**Acknowledge** - Acknowledge that it's serious and you're worried about your friend's well-being. Remember there's no harm in asking if a person is thinking about suicide. (*Self-acknowledge that you need help*)

**Care**- Show you care by listening non-judgmentally; offer encouragement but don't promise to keep a secret (*Self- know others care about you and want to help*)

**Tell** - Let your friend know that you have to tell a trusted adult and offer to go with them. Even if they don't agree, it's important to talk to someone right away. (*Self-tell a trusted adult how you're feeling, it's important to ask for help - don't try to get through this alone*)

# Finding Help in Colorado Springs

- Aspen Pointe Crisis Stabilization Unit - 844-493-TALK (8255)
- Peak View Behavioral Health - 719-444-8484
- Pikes Peak Suicide Prevention -(719) 573-7447
- Mayfield Counseling Center (719) 452-4803
- Cedar Springs Hospital - 719-633-4114
- Highlands Behavioral Health 720-348-2800
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline 800-273-TALK ([suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org))
- 911
- Talk to your doctor or pediatrician
- Militaryonesource - 800-342-9647 (active duty military only)
- Safe2tell.org 1-877-542-7233





**Thanks for listening!**