



# Reluctance Discussing Suicide with Students

- Many members of the school community have personal experiences with suicide.
- Stigma associated with suicide and concern that discussing suicide may prompt others to harm themselves.
- Families reluctant to have suicide mentioned as possible cause of their child's death.



# Impact of NOT Talking About Suicide

- Survivors of suicide loss may feel isolated & blame themselves.
- People who are affected may not seek support which puts them at a higher risk of harming themselves.
- Facts may be replaced by rumors.
- The stigma of suicide reinforces the silence around suicide.

## **Positive Action**

**Acknowledging that the death is a suicide,  
promotes healing and minimizes risk.**



# Tips for Educators

- Suicide is a preventable public health issue
- FERPA & HIPPA Guidelines
- Murray City School District Crisis Response Plan: Take the *right* action after a suicide to prevent future suicides
- Respond to ALL self-harming comments: Coordinate with social workers, administrators to contact the parent and develop a safety plan
- Convey HOPE: Situations and feelings change
- Terminology Matters: Died by suicide, lives with a mental health disorder, ...
- Prevention Works: Foster protective factors & decrease risk factors

# Students May Grieve Differently than Adults

## ■ Behaviors:

- Students express their feelings primarily through their behavior.
- Students grieve in shorter time frames.
- Students may appear unaffected and want to resume regular activities.
- Students may cry, share memories and stories about past personal experiences.
- Students don't have to be sad all the time.

## Classroom Tips for Teachers

Maintain a regular routine

Make time to talk and check-in with students

Be patient and acknowledge students' feelings

Draw a picture or sign a card for the family

Write in a journal

It's okay to be sad and cry

Laughter is not a sign of "less" love or grief

Share memories of the deceased



# Protective Factors

## Teach Social Competency Skills:

Problem-Solving

Assertive Communication

Healthy Coping Strategies

Promote School Success (academic & social)

Identify Personal Strengths

Belief in Self

Set Goals & Action Steps

Sense of Optimism

Social Contact & Engagement at School

Identify Network of Support

Community Resources



***Our relationship with students is the primary intervention!***



# Community Resources

- 911
  - Information & Referral: 211
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- University of Utah Health Care Crisis Line 801-587-3000
  - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:  
<http://www.afsp.org>
  - LGBTQ - Trevor Lifeline at 866-488-7386

