

Supporting Each Other

June 15, 2022

Newton Community

Newton North High School

Steven J. Karaiskos, Ph.D.



Goals for Today

- Raise awareness about suicide
- Learn how to support each other through applying skills such as befriending, active listening, and honest talk
- Proactively build our emotional intelligence skills
- Understanding we all have a role to play in suicide prevention
- Identify suicide prevention resources
- Help spread a bit of hope!

Agenda

- Samaritans
- Suicide Awareness
- Support for all
- Emotional Intelligence & Emotion Granularity
- Befriending
- Empathetic Listening
- Honest Talk
- Well-Being
- Supporting Each Other
- Resources

Things to remember:

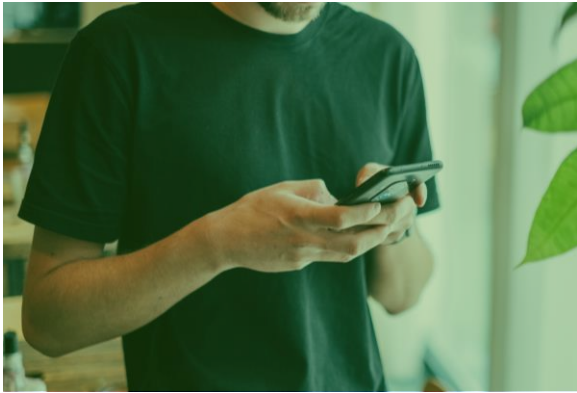
- Suicide is a heavy topic
- Take care of yourself as needed during this time and after this presentation
- Ask questions – we will have time at the end for questions/reflections
- Reach out if you need help
- Visit www.samaritanshope.org for information



samaritans

you are not alone

Our Programs



24/7 Helpline



Community
Education &
Outreach



Grief Support
Services

Samaritans 24/7 Helpline

(877) 870-4673 (HOPE)

Call or Text

Free | Confidential | Anonymous





To Acknowledge

- The world of suicide prevention and research has a lot of work to do in support of underserved and minority communities impacted by suicide
- Samaritans is actively engaged with this focused work and is looking for partners within these communities to connect, collaborate, and communicate

Mental Health

What are the first words that come to mind when you hear “mental health”?

What about “suicide”?

Suicide Facts & Figures



48,344

people die by suicide annually in the U.S., with more than 1.3 million attempts nationwide



740

suicides reported in Massachusetts, placing MA at 3rd lowest per capita in the U.S.



800,000

people die by suicide annually in the world – one person every 40 seconds

Suicide Facts & Figures



10th

leading cause of death
overall for all ages



45-64

year-olds have the highest
reported suicide rate,
specifically white males;
second highest rate
occurred in those 85+



3.6x

as many men die by suicide
compared to women,
though women attempt
more often

Youth & Suicide

2nd

leading cause of death
for youth ages 10-24

1 in 6

high school students report
having thoughts of suicide

2X

as many lesbian and gay youth
report having suicidal thoughts,
compared to straight peers

Communities at higher risk:

Black, Latinx, and Indigenous youth, LGBTQ+ folks, and
those involved in child welfare and imprisonment system

LGBTQ+ Community & Suicide

3.5X

as many LGB youth have attempted suicide compared to straight peers

40%

of transgender adults reported having made a suicide attempt

40%

of high school students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning have seriously considered suicide



each episode of harassment or abuse increases the likelihood of self-harming behavior by 2.5x

24%

of young teen deaths by suicide occurred in those identifying as LGBTQ+

College Students & Suicide

40%

of college students
suffer from depression

4.8%

of college students have
attempted suicide in their
lifetimes

1 in 12

college students has
a suicide plan

22%

of college students have
suicidal thoughts

80-90%

of college students who die by
suicide were not receiving help
from college counselors

People of Color & Suicide

2X

as many Black youth (5-12) die by suicide than white youth of the same ages



suicide rates for Black men are rising faster than other races

4X

as many LGBTQ+ youth of color die by suicide compared to those outside of this group

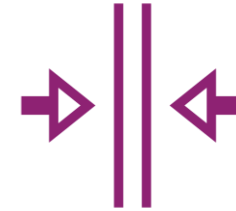
Young Women & Suicide

50%

increase in women's
suicide rates between
2000 and 2016 for all ages

4%

increase in suicide rate
expected for women of all ages



discrepancy between male and
female suicide rates is narrowing,
and has been since 2007

3X

increase in suicide rate for women
ages 10-34 from 2000 to 2016

Complexity *of* Suicide

- Suicide is often described as a point at which pain exceeds an individual's ability to cope
- In order to reduce stigma, language change from “died by suicide,” from “commit suicide”
- Many layers and narratives to every human – the same is true for suicide

Risk Factors



family history of suicide



previous suicide attempts



physical/mental illness or depressive disorders



physical, sexual, domestic, verbal, and child abuse/trauma



substantial loss (relational, social, work, financial, etc.)



facing oppression and injustice, such as racism and/or sexism



substance use or addiction, including behavioral addictions



lack of access to healthcare



challenges that LGBTQ+ people face, particularly youth



homelessness

Risk Factors *for* Youth



low self-esteem



exposure to stigma



challenges at home (i.e. divorce)



family history of mental health disorders



self-harm or injury



poor coping or problem-solving skills



social isolation



school stress and high expectations



bullying and cyberbullying



access to lethal means

Suicide *within* Communities



Lack of access to culturally competent healthcare



Socioeconomic conditions



Cultural differences



Lack of information & understanding



Stigma



Trauma



Language

Warning Signs



talking, writing, or joking about death, dying, or suicide



direct statements like *"I'm tired of being a burden"* or *"No one would miss me if I were gone"*



changes in weight, appetite, hygiene, or appearance



sleeping too little or too much



declining school or work performance



impulsive behavior or seeking lethal means



loss of pleasure or interest in hobbies and activities



giving away prized possessions and putting one's affairs in order



extreme mood swings, including a sudden mood lift



withdrawing from friends, family, or society

Resiliency & Risk Mitigating Factors



sense of purpose and hope



effective behavioral healthcare



life skills (problem solving, coping, adapting, etc.)



asking for help



family and social support and connections



limiting access to means



interests, hobbies, and goals



faith and/or values



ability to express emotions



sense of humor

True or False



Talking about suicide will cause someone to consider suicide



People who are suicidal usually warn those around them



Suicide is caused by one isolated event or factor

True or False



Asking a person about suicide will only make them angry and increase the risk of suicide



Asking someone directly about suicide lowers anxiety, enhances communication, and lowers the risk of an impulsive act



It is best to leave these conversations only to experts

BREATHE



For all...

What was a time you reached out for support – what did you want and what did you get?

Teens?

Parents?

Sometimes we stumble into idealized support over realistic support

Fixing vs. Problem Solving

What can we do...

in support of our own self and each other





1

Early Intervention should
be the emphasis

Who | What | Where | When | Why

2

SUPPORT

One can not recover from anxiety by just staying calm.

One can not recover from depression by just being positive.

One can not recover from anorexia nervosa by just eating more.

If it was that simple, individuals would not be struggling in the first place.





3

**Developing empathy is also
a vital strategy in reducing
stigma and supporting those
struggling**

4

Healing emotional pain is
key

ENGAGE





5

Insight and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence has five components in it:

Self-awareness – the knowledge of what we feel and why we feel so

Self-regulation – the ability to express our feelings in the right way

Motivation – the internal drive to change the way we feel and express

Empathy – the ability to relate to others' emotions and see the world from their perspective

Social skills – the power to communicate effectively and build strong connections at home or in the workplace.



PROACTIVE
EARLY INTERVENTION
SUPPORT
EMPATHY
EMOTIONAL
INTELLIGENCE

Developing Emotional Intelligence



For all...

- How are you feeling?
- What do you need?

Developing Emotion Granularity

In a moment, I'm going to ask if you would close your eyes and see if you can work out what emotions you're feeling right now.

You're not going to tell anyone or anything.

The idea is to see how easy or perhaps hard you find it to pinpoint exactly what you're feeling.

Now, what emotion are you feeling...

-Adapted from the work of Cultural Historian [Tiffany Watt Smith](#)

Developing Emotion Granularity

What were you feeling?

Perhaps you felt some strange, distant worry about that email you sent this morning or excitement about something you've got planned for this evening.

Maybe you felt that exhilaration that comes when we get together in big groups of people like this; the Welsh called it "hwyl," from the word for boat sails.

.

Developing Emotion Granularity

Or maybe you felt all of these things.

There are some emotions which wash the world in a single color, like the terror felt as a car skids.

But more often, our emotions crowd and jostle together until it is actually quite hard to tell them apart.

Some slide past so quickly you'd hardly even notice them, like the nostalgia that will make you reach out to grab a familiar brand in the supermarket

Developing Emotion Granularity

Most people who tell us to pay attention to our well-being talk of the importance of naming our emotions. But these names aren't neutral labels.

Emotions have weight tied to our:

- Our culture's values
- Our expectations
- And they transmit ideas about who we think we are



People who can construct finely-grained emotional experiences go to the doctor less frequently, use medication less frequently, and spend fewer days hospitalized for illness.

- Lisa Feldman Barrett Ph.D.

Developing Emotion Granularity



One of the best things you can do for your emotional health is to beef up your concepts of emotions.



Let's talk about two extremes – two emotion concepts:
Feeling Crappy and Feeling Awesome

Two Extremes

Feeling Awesome

happy, content, thrilled,
relaxed, joyful, hopeful,
inspired, prideful, adoring,
grateful, blissful

- Others?

Feeling Crappy

angry, aggravated, alarmed,
spiteful, grumpy, remorseful,
gloomy, mortified, uneasy,
dread-ridden, resentful, afraid,
envious, woeful, melancholy

- Others?

Developing Emotion Granularity

Instead of generalizing, getting specific

- allows your brain to have many more options for predicting, categorizing and perceiving emotions
- provides you with the tools for more flexible and useful responses.
- You could predict and categorize your sensations more efficiently and better suit your actions to your environment.



By sharing how you ACTUALLY feel, the person you shared with may know more about how to support you

Developing Emotion Granularity

In a collection of scientific studies, people who could distinguish finely among their unpleasant feelings were:

- 30 percent more flexible when regulating their emotions
- less likely to drink excessively when stressed
- And less likely to retaliate aggressively against someone who has hurt them.
- For people who suffer from schizophrenia, those who exhibit higher emotional granularity report better relationships with family and friends, compared to those who exhibit lower granularity, and are better able to choose the correct action in social situations.

Developing Emotion Granularity

Try also to invent your own emotion concepts, using your powers of social reality and conceptual combination.

John Koenig, writer of the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows created the word defined "sonder," the idea that we all think of ourselves as the main character and everyone else is just extras.

But, in reality all the main character, and you yourself are an extra in someone else's story.

You can do the same thing yourself.

An emotionally intelligent person not only has lots of concepts but also knows which ones to use and when.

Suppose you see your teenage son heading to school looking like he just rolled out of bed: hair unkempt, clothing wrinkled, and last night's dinner dotting his shirt.

- You could berate him and send him back to his room to change, but instead, ask yourself what you are feeling.
- Are you concerned that his teachers won't take him seriously?
- Nervous that his attire will reflect badly on you as a parent?
- Irritated that you spend money on clothes he never wears?
- Or, perhaps you're sad that he's grown up and you miss the exuberance of his childhood

Depending on the answer, you can come up with a much more skillful response than just yelling at him.

Process Emotion Granularity

- Fine-Tune your Feelings – what am I feeling and why am I feeling that way?
- Express your feeling in words – explore how your feelings connect to an event
- Explore contradictory or complex feelings

For example, when I come home from a trip, my dog waits eagerly at the door, barks loudly when she sees me, and wags her tail. I interpret this as meaning she is very happy and excited to see me but also wants to let me know that she is mad and sad that I went away. She feels great relief that I am back, because she was scared of being alone and confused about where I went. – Melanie Greenberg, PhD

BREATHE



Parents

Befriending



Befriending techniques



Steering toward the pain



Reflections



Validations



Open Ended Questions



Verbal Nods



Comfort with Silence



Tone

Steering towards the pain

Means that we steer ourselves towards the individual's pain

We don't avoid

We don't give suggestions or focus on ways to feel better

Communicates the individual that we are comfortable hearing their pain and creates a safe space to share more about it

Reflections

- Statements that communicate to the individual that we've heard what they've said and to check our understanding of what they've said
- 4 types
 - Simple (Mirroring) – repeating verbatim what is said
 - Paraphrasing – using our own words to restate what is said
 - Summarizing – capturing multiple thoughts that were stated
 - Complex – noticing a theme or related thought stated earlier in the conversation and connecting it to what is said

Validations

Statements that convey that we have heard an emotion and that that emotion makes sense and is normal or that the pain of the emotion is very real

Tends to go further than a reflection – identifies an emotion and saying why that emotion makes sense

“It makes sense to feel so hurt and confused when she spread those rumors behind your back like that”

Open Ended Questions

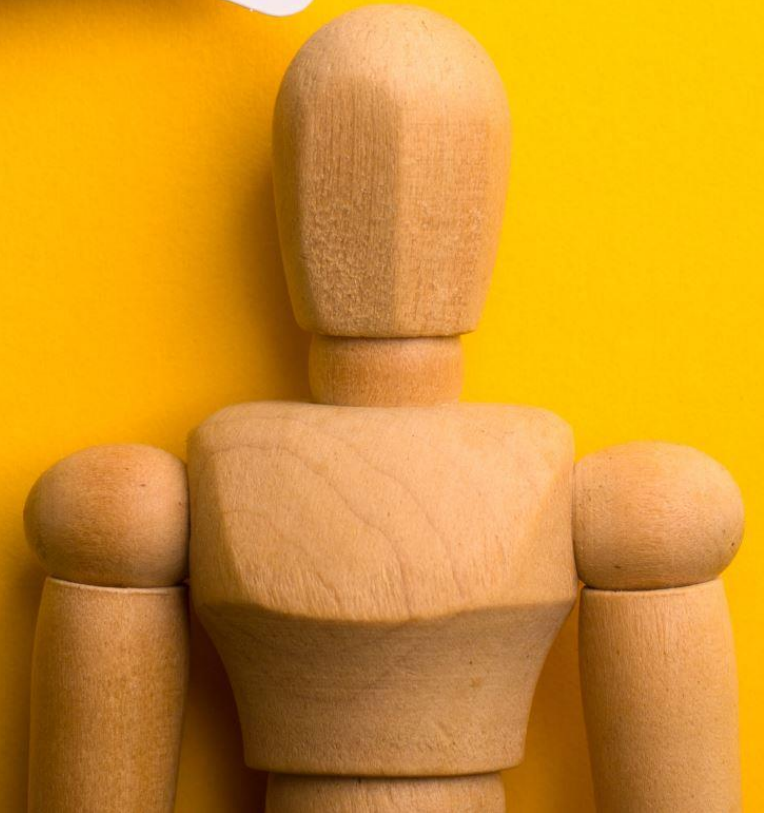
Question that typically isn't answered with a one-word response

Often starts with "How" or "What"

Avoid starting with "Why"

Avoid back-to-back questions

Explore the emotions or the experience of the individual rather than factual details of the situation





Verbal Nods

Verbal cues that show the individual we are listening to the conversation

Examples include: Mhmm, yeah, oh wow, ah I see, OK

Comfort with Silence

A technique to pace the conversation by giving space for the individual to share

Listen with your heart not your words

80/20 rule

Tone

Remember that how we say something conveys as much or more than the words themselves

General rule of thumb – lower, slower, and a little warmer

Remember, you can set the thermostat in the moment

ALL

Active/Empathetic Listening





This can feel vulnerable and a bit scary



Creates a safe and trusting connection



Use thoughtful, open-ended, empathic questions that invite deeper thought & consideration such as, "What were you feeling when that happened?".



Remind yourself empathetic listening is a gift you may give and doesn't mean "I agree with you".



Try to steer your comments away from offering solutions.



When you need to say something, interject, don't interrupt.

Active/ Empathetic Listening



**Talking about feelings can and
does help people feel better.**

—Ann Moreno, co-founder and
clinical director of Family Recovery Specialists



The most important advice is to have a caring conversation. The evidence has clearly demonstrated that talking about suicide does not cause suicide. Instead, talking openly about suicidal thoughts and feelings can increase hope and help someone on their journey to recovery.

—Colleen Carr, Deputy Director of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

Empathetic Listening

- **Listen** – with your heart not your words
- **Listen** – you don't need to “fix” or have the answers
- **Listen**
- Non-judgmentally
- One-mindfully
- Not innate
- Research has shown again and again that those in crisis are asking for someone to listen



Active (empathetic) listening skills are something none of us are really taught. It's less about what you say and more about how you encourage them to talk more and give them a response that is non-judgmental and supportive

—Christine Moulrier – Chief Medical Office, AFSP



The human soul doesn't want to be advised or fixed or saved.
It simply want to be witnessed...exactly as it is.

—Parker Palmer

BREATHE





Well-Being & Self-Care

Creating an ethos of well-being with self-care activities

- Multifaceted and can include elements of wellness that go beyond mental and physical
- How do you take care of yourself professionally?
- How do you practice self-care throughout the work day? The school day? On week nights? On weekends?



Physical



Emotional



Environmental



Financial



Intellectual



Social



Spiritual



Occupational



i am
taking care
of myself
today by

Artist: Carissa Potter Carlson / peopleiveloved.com



Resources to learn more

- [Zero Suicide Project](#)
- [Question, Persuade, Refer](#)
- [Stanley Brown Safety Plan](#)
- [SPRC Counseling on Access to Lethal Means \(CALM\) Training](#)
- [Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality \(CAMS\)](#)
- [American Association of Suicideology \(AAS\)](#)
- [Nock Lab - Harvard University](#)



Resources in the Community

- [NSPL](#)
- [Samaritans, Inc.](#)
- [Samaritans Southcoast](#)
- [Samaritans on Cape Cod & the Islands](#)
- [Samaritans of Merrimack Valley](#)
- [Call2Talk](#)

Resources

- **Samaritans Crisis Helpline**

877-870-4673 or texting/chatting ([SamaritansHope.org](https://www.SamaritansHope.org))

- **National Suicide Prevention Hotline**

800-273-8255 or texting/chatting ([SuicidePreventionLifeline.org](https://www.SuicidePreventionLifeline.org))

- **The Trevor Project for LGBTQ Youth Crisis Line**

866-488-7386 or texting/chatting ([TheTrevorProject.org](https://www.TheTrevorProject.org))

- **Veterans Crisis Line**

800-273-8255, Press 1 or texting/chatting ([VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net))

- **Local Emergency Services Programs (ESPs)**

877-382-1609 and enter zip code

Resources *for* Postvention

- **Samaritans' Grief Support Services**

- SafePlace meetings, Survivor to Survivor Visits, and information regarding grief after suicide

- GSS@Samaritanshope.org

- [Grief Support Services Request Form](#)

- **Riverside Trauma Center**

- Critical incident services to community spaces following a traumatic event, including death by suicide

- riversidetraumacenter.org or (781) 433-0672



The human soul doesn't want to be advised or fixed or saved.
It simply wants to be witnessed...exactly as it is.

—Parker Palmer

Samaritans 24/7 Helpline

(877) 870-4673 (HOPE)

Call or Text

Free | Confidential | Anonymous



New Support



Feeling overwhelmed?

We understand. Hey Sam is a support line for young people, staffed by young people.

Text for any reason, 9AM - 9PM.

text: 1-877-832-0890



...for each other



“What makes something better is connection.”

-Brene Brown



One thing you learned...

One thing you'd like to share...

One hope...





Moment of Compassion

Taking care of you can sometimes means finding joy, belonging, compassion, and/or gratitude

Consider a compassionate action you may do in the next 24 hours for
yourself

Consider a compassionate action you may do in the next 24 hours for
someone else

Help Our Program

Your feedback helps us continue to improve our suicide prevention workshops!

SURVEY & RESOURCES will be sent as a follow-up

This link has also been posted in the chat. Please open it now and take a few minutes to complete it or complete it after the workshop has ended.

Contact Us

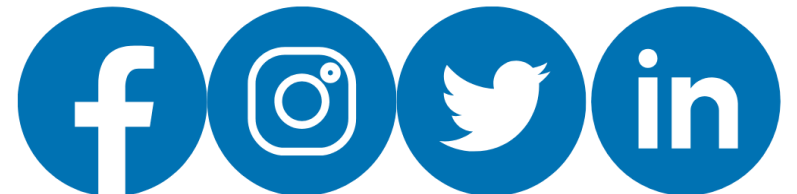
Steven J. Karaiskos

Senior Director of Community Education & Outreach

skaraiskos@samaritanshope.org

Business Line: (617) 536-2460

www.samaritanshope.org





samaritans

you are not alone