

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE: Suicide Prevention

QUESTION 1 - TRUE or FALSE:

People who attempt suicide may or may not have a mental illness.

TRUE - A mental illness does increase one's risk; however, many people have attempted and completed suicide who did not have a mental illness or diagnosis.

Additional Fact: The frontal cortex of the brain does not fully develop until one is about 26 years old. This part of the brain controls emotions, rational thinking and impulse behaviors.

QUESTION 2 - TRUE or FALSE:

Only counselors and principals can intervene and help a student who is suicidal.

FALSE - Anyone can intervene and help support someone who is suicidal. You need to listen and pay attention to the risk factors and warning signs.

Additional Fact: Students usually talk to one another first then a trusted adult. Anyone can become aware of a student who is suicidal and take action – ANYONE.

QUESTION 3 - TRUE or FALSE:

Only one risk factor is ever known for each suicide attempter.

FALSE – There are typically multiple factors that are associated with an individual's suicide attempt.

Additional Facts: Think about the risk factors and the ways many of them can be linked; such as:

** "Family Dysfunction" & "Substance Use/Addiction": A 11th grade male – parents are divorcing and he is blindsided by this. He has broken into his father's liquor cabinet each night for the past two and a half weeks. And he is now smoking marijuana.

** "Loss or Suicide of a Loved One" & "Lack of Purpose or Self-worth" & "Social Challenges": A 7th grade female – sister (8th grade) died as an innocent victim in a drunk driving accident. She and her sister were involved in many of the same friend groups and extra-curricular activities; of which now she no longer wants to participate.

QUESTION 4 - TRUE or FALSE:

You can be a protective factor for someone if you encourage and model help seeking behaviors.

TRUE – People around us can be a protective factor by role modeling that we all need help at times and there are resources and experts who can help.

Additional Facts:

** There are free posters and print materials available from Alabama Department of Public Health which feature the Suicide Hotline. These can be posted around schools.

** Utilize student programs to share reducing risk factors... Anti-bullying, drugs and alcohol.