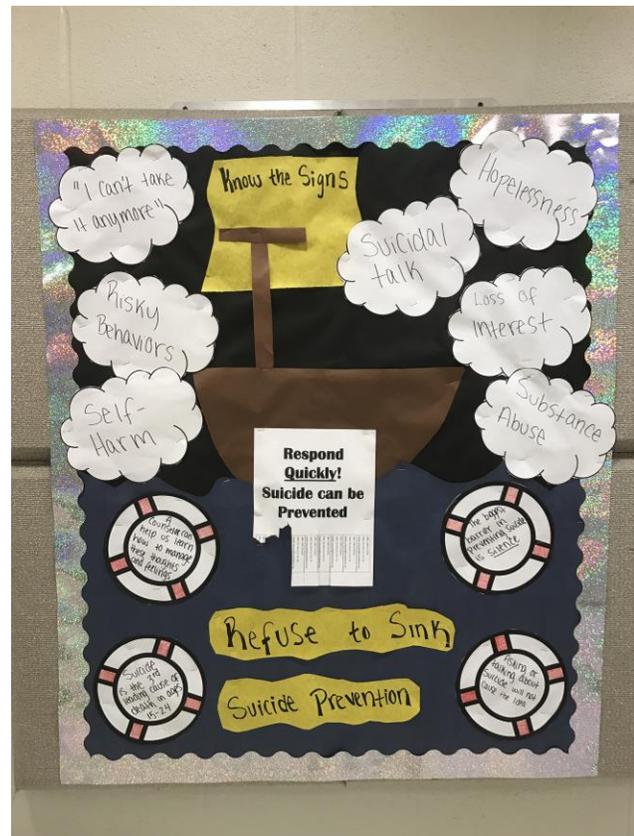




FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: JANUARY 23, 2017
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Signs of Suicide Program Coming to Charlotte Middle School

Charlotte Middle School will implement the SOS Signs of Suicide Program the weeks of January 30th and February 6th. SOS is an evidence-based program that has proven to be successful at increasing help seeking by students about themselves or a friend. The goals of the program are to help students understand that depression is a treatable illness, to explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression, to provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend, to impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns, and to help students know whom in the school they can turn to for help, if they need it.



The program teaches the acronym ACT, which stand for Acknowledge, Care, and Tell. This encourages students to acknowledge that they are seeing signs of depression, self-injury, or suicide in a friend; to let their friends know that they care and are concerned; and to tell a trusted adult. School social workers and other trained professionals will implement the curriculum and facilitate discussions based on the material presented in both 7th and 8th grade classrooms. Any students that have additional questions and/or concerns will then have an opportunity to confidentially speak with a trained professional.

Depression, self-injury, and suicide are all very important topics that need to be addressed. According to the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth survey that was completed by Eaton County middle school

students in 2016, 20.8% of students reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide (Michigan Department of Education). So how can parents tell the difference between if their teen is just being moody or if it is more serious? The three factors to look at include severity, duration, and if the symptoms are present in different areas of your child's life. The more severe and longer lasting the emotions and symptoms, the more likely to be a mood disorder such as depression. Some tips for parents to start conversations with their adolescent children who may be resistant to opening up include: asking open-ended questions, asking them what they think would help a situation instead of rushing to solve the problem, being available and making sure your child knows it, and trying to talk in places that involve less eye contact (such as the car). Parents are encouraged to reach out to school social workers if they have a concern about their child's well-being.

The staff at Charlotte Middle School want to make sure that students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally. This is one way that we will work to achieve that desired outcome. If you would like more information about this program, please contact the Charlotte Middle School office at (517) 541-5700.