

What: Suicide Awareness and Intervention Course for Teens

Who: Presented by Caring Contact

For: Westfield High School Students

When: February 22, 2019

Time: 6:45-9:00pm

Where: WHS library

Sponsored by: WHS PTSO Grant

Cost: - Free

Registration – appreciated for planning purposes but not required. E-mail Susan Kolesar, at skolesar@westfieldnj12.org to register.

Advisor: Susan Kolesar, Health Educator

Why: Friends are often the first line of communication for teens in emotional distress. It is critical that they have skills to assist their peers in these times and are able to intervene effectively and lead them to appropriate resources when necessary. This course will give students evidence-based strategies for doing just that. They will also learn the potential warning signs for people at risk for suicide.

Course information from Caring Contact

Suicide Awareness and Intervention for Teens

The course begins by touching on emotional health and the importance of expressing feelings. There will be discussions about ways to nurture emotional health, and the importance of empathy throughout the training.

The instructor will initiate a gentle and honest conversation about suicide, acknowledging that it is scary, taboo, and loaded with stigma. With this, statistics are presented to highlight an awareness of the problem among teens. The instructor will specifically describe warning signs for teens to look for in themselves and others. The program will help teens understand the risk factors that may make someone more susceptible to thoughts of suicide as well as protective factors that may help keep them safe.

Finally, the course will provide intervention skills; step by step instructions for a teen when faced with someone who is considering suicide. By the end of the course, teens will feel more comfortable talking about this difficult topic. They will be better able to identify their own emotions, recognizing when they are in distress and how to ask for help. They will also have an understanding of the signs that someone else may be struggling, what words to say in that situation, and strategies to collaborate to keep them safe.

Caring Contact works with educators and parents to bring this program to schools or youth groups. Any school administrator or parent interested in introducing Suicide Awareness and Intervention for Teens to their school, or simply wanting to learn more about the program, should contact Mary Claire Givelber, the hotline's Director of Community Engagement, at 908.301.1899 or maryclaire.givelber@caringcontact.org.

About Caring Contact

Caring Contact is an award-winning, volunteer-staffed caring and crisis hotline providing active listening support and best-in-class education to the Central and Northern New Jersey community. We attentively and compassionately serve those in emotional distress and educate our communities about the power of personal connection. We are affiliated with CONTACT USA, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the American Association of Suicidology. If you are in crisis and need someone to listen, call us at 908-232-2880. To learn more, visit www.caringcontact.org.