

The Alabama Youth Suicide Prevention Program (AYSPP) from the Alabama Department of Public Health's Injury Prevention Branch is funded through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. In the state of Alabama, one person dies by suicide every 12 hours, and Alabama has shown a pattern of suicide rates higher than the national average since 1990. Suicide was the 11<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in Alabama with 750 citizens lost to suicide in 2015, as compared to 473 deaths due to homicide. In 2015, 93 youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24 died by suicide.

AYSPP is a suicide prevention program targeting youth and young adults across the state, part of which involves collaborating with schools, educational institutions, juvenile justice systems, foster care systems, substance abuse and mental health programs, and other child and youth-supporting organizations. ADPH has partnered with: The Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resources Coalition (ASPARC), ADPH Social Workers, and five crisis centers located in north, north central, central, southeast, and southwest Alabama. As a result of these partnerships, AYSPP is able to provide statewide suicide prevention training to educational institutions and community organizations throughout the state of Alabama.

AYSPP and its partners are available to assist educational institutions in satisfying the requirements of The Jason Flatt Act by providing evidence based suicide prevention training. Crisis centers are able to provide suicide prevention training to school personnel and students at *no cost*. Each of the training programs offered through AYSPP meet the continuing education requirement for suicide awareness and prevention. Suicide awareness and prevention trainings feature thorough but practical information from certified instructors. These trainings will provide access to community resources and enable participants to recognize the warning signs of suicide, respond to at-risk individuals, increase help-seeking behaviors, and assist in creating an action plan. Currently, there are two suicide prevention trainings offered through AYSPP: Question Persuade Refer (QPR) and Hazelden's Lifelines Curriculum. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center has designated both of these interventions as programs with evidence of effectiveness based on their inclusion in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

***QPR Gatekeeper Training*** is designed to detect persons who are in the thinking or ideational phase of a suicide plan. QPR may also discover people who have already made one or more non-lethal attempts. QPR is a 1-2 hour educational program delivered in person by certified QPR gatekeeper instructors. It is designed to teach lay and professional "gatekeepers" the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond. Gatekeepers can include anyone who is strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide (e.g. parents, friends, neighbors, teachers, coaches, caseworkers, police officers). The process follows three steps: (1) Question the individual's desire or intent regarding suicide, (2) Persuade the person to seek and accept help, and (3) Refer the person to appropriate resources. Trainees receive a QPR booklet and wallet card as a review and resource tool that includes local referral resources (Quinett, 2012).

***Hazelden's Lifelines Curriculum*** is a comprehensive suicide prevention program for middle and high school students. The overall goal of the Lifelines intervention is to promote a caring, competent school community in which help-seeking is encouraged and modeled and suicidal behavior is recognized as an issue that cannot be kept secret. Lifelines aims to increase the likelihood that school staff and students will be able and willing to identify at-risk youth when they encounter them, provide an appropriate initial response, and obtain help. The curriculum consists of four 45 minute or two 90-minute lessons that

incorporate elements of the social development model and employ interactive teaching techniques, including role play. Crisis Center Coordinators teach the lessons within the regular school setting. These lessons were developed specifically for students in grades 8-10 but can be used with students through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Hazelden, 2010).

As a component of the Hazelden's Lifelines Curriculum, crisis centers are also able to provide postvention training which will enable school personnel to manage the effects of suicide by developing an organized response. Postvention training will also assist administrators in understanding the school's role in the development of postvention strategies. Postvention addresses five key objectives:

1. Validate the critical but limited role of the school in response to traumatic deaths like suicide;
2. Develop the concept of the competent and compassionate school community as the context for response;
3. Present a best-practice model to assist in the development of policies and procedures for structuring in the schools response;
4. Present a toolbox of practical response options that reflects the developmental needs of students;
5. Identify school-based and community resources for vulnerable students.

This training will enable administrators to develop a strategic plan that can be practically implemented in a school setting (Hazelden, 2010).

If you would like to request suicide prevention training at your school, please contact Carrea Dye, AYSPP Program Manager via email [carrea.dye@adph.state.al.us](mailto:carrea.dye@adph.state.al.us), directly at 334-206-2085, or contact a crisis center in your area:

**ASPARC**

Location: Birmingham, Alabama  
President: David Coombs  
Email: [info@asparc.org](mailto:info@asparc.org)

**Crisis Services of North Alabama**

Location: Jackson County  
Educator: Gini Tucker  
Email: [gini@csna.org](mailto:gini@csna.org)

**Crisis Center, Inc.**

Location: Birmingham, Alabama  
Coordinator: Abby Litovsky  
Email: [alitovsky@crisiscenterbham.com](mailto:alitovsky@crisiscenterbham.com)

**Family Sunshine Center**

Location: Montgomery, Alabama  
Coordinator: Jennifer Hartley  
Email: [jhartley@familysunshine.org](mailto:jhartley@familysunshine.org)

**SpectraCare Health Systems, Inc.**

Location: Dothan, Alabama

Educator(s): Ebony Crews and Odell Chambers

Location: Dothan, Alabama

Email: [ebonyc@spectracare.org](mailto:ebonyc@spectracare.org)

**Family Counseling Center of Mobile**

Location: Mobile, Alabama

Coordinator: Chalissee Peltier

Email: [cpeltier@lifelinesmobile.org](mailto:cpeltier@lifelinesmobile.org)

AYSPP also has free educational materials that can be ordered or printed from the website: [www.alabamapublichealth.gov/suicide/materials](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/suicide/materials). AYSPP looks forward to providing training and collaborating with school communities on efforts to reduce the number of lives lost to suicide across the state of Alabama.

## **Bibliography**

Quinett, P. *Question. Persuade. Refer. Ask A Question, Save A Life*. Sponktane, WA: QPR Institute, 2010.

Underwood, M., Fell, F. T., & Spinazzola, N. A. *Hazelden Lifelines Postvetion: Responding to Suicide and Other Traumatic Death*. Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden Foundation, 2010.