

November-2018

Dear 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents/guardians;

We will be teaching the Signs of Suicide Prevention Program in our 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts classes in December. This program helps youth and adults differentiate between normal development and what may be a more serious mental health issue such as depression.

Adolescence is a time of many changes and challenges. Each child handles it differently, but most parents and adolescents wonder: How do I know if someone is really struggling and needs help, or is just going through a “rough patch?” The Signs of Suicide Prevention Program teaches students what to do when they are worried about a friend by employing the **ACT** message.

### **Acknowledge-Care-Tell**

**Acknowledge** that you are seeing signs of depression or suicide in yourself or a friend and that it is serious.

**Care** Let your friend know that you care about them and that you are concerned that they need help you cannot provide.

**Tell** a trusted adult. Take your friend with you or go alone if you need to.

Some of the program goals are to:

- Decrease suicide attempts by increasing knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression among students.
- Encourage individual help-seeking and help-seeking on behalf of a friend.
- Reduce a stigma by linking suicide to mental illness that, like physical illness, requires treatment.
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention by educating them to identify signs of depression and suicide in youth by providing information and resources. \*

\*We will be attaching the SOS Parent Newsletter to our website. It has helpful information in relation to talking with your child, teens and alcohol, depression, cutting, bullying, and more.

Let's team together to help our students understand the symptoms of depression and suicide risk and how to respond. Please contact the Stanwood Middle School Office if you have any questions regarding this curriculum. 360-629-1350.