

# MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS LEARNING SERIES

## Virtual Strand

Suicide Prevention in a Virtual Setting, Presented by Benjamin Fernandez

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### Webinar Summary:

Students experience a roller coaster of emotions as they progress through school. While most cope successfully with these challenges, many will have emotional pain so great that they have thoughts of suicide. By the age of 14, approximately 50% of lifetime mental concerns begin and 90% of deaths by suicide had an underlying mental illness. As many students are preparing to return to school mental health professionals will face the challenge of service delivery in both in-person and distance learning environments. This session will focus on the considerations for suicide prevention in a virtual distance learning environment.

### Resources:

[SEL Resources](#), [Crisis Intervention Resources](#), [Suicide Prevention and Intervention Resources](#)

### References:

- Brock, S. E. & Fernandez, B.S. (2019). School Suicide Postvention. Documented session presented at the National Association of School Psychologists 2019 Annual Convention, Atlanta, GA.
- Center of Disease Control and Prevention. (2017, July 20). 10 Leading Causes of Death and Injury. Retrieved from CDC.gov: <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leadingcauses.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2020, May 4). Fatal injury data. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>

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- Erbacher, T. A., Singer, J. B., & Poland, S. (2015). *Suicide in the schools: A practitioner's guide to multi-level prevention, assessment, intervention, and postvention*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Fernandez, B.S. & Lieberman (2018). *Addressing Youth Suicide in Schools: Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention*. Documented session presented at the National Association of School Psychologists 2018 Annual Convention, Chicago, IL.
- Fernandez, B. S., Brock, S. E., & Coffey, L. (2016, September). *Suicide Risk Assessment*. Bethesda, MD.
- Kann, L., McManus, T., Harris, W. A., Shanklin, S L., Flint, M. A., Queen, B., ... Ethier, K. A. (2018, June). *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2017*. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, 67(8), 1-114. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.ss6708a1>
- Miller, D. N. (2011). *Child and adolescent suicidal behavior: School-based prevention, assessment, and intervention*. New York, NY: Guilford Press
- National Association of School Psychologists (2020). *Comprehensive suicide prevention in a time of distance learning (Handout)*.

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### Suicide Prevention Discussion Guide:

1. **Envision what your ideal prevention program would look like in your school.**
  - a. Who are the key members of your school prevention team?
  - b. What data are you using to understand the needs and strengths of your school?
  - c. How are you collecting data to inform your prevention work?
  - d. What prevention goals have you established for the school year?
  
2. **Review you school/school district's suicide prevention program.**
  - a. In the context of virtual service delivery and doing no harm, are there ways to adapt your current prevention offerings from the in person to the virtual environment?
  - b. What enhancements to your program are necessary?
  - c. Are the supports accessible to all students and families?
    - i. What barriers are preventing students and families from accessing your prevention programming?
  
3. **Knowledge**
  - a. What key concepts/information do you want your students to know?
  - b. What key concepts/information do you want your families and staff to know?