

in a world that is so *connected*,
why do we feel so *alone*?

NOT ALONE

a film about teen depression and suicide

NOT ALONE

A Discussion Guide for Schools and Communities

www.not-alone.live

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Letter from the Filmmakers

Dear Friend,

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year old Americans.

This film was created to give youths an opportunity to help each other. Our goal is not only to prevent suicides, but to promote healthy discussion and understanding of the important role mental health plays in our lives.

The teens featured in the film have first hand experience and knowledge about mental illness and thoughts of suicide. They are the experts educating us about mental illness, suicide and recovery. Because they are peers, their voices are trusted by our young audience. Sharing their insights with students, teachers and parents, we hope to empower your communities so you can prevent suicides.

Talking about suicide is a challenge. However it is a vital mission of suicide prevention. Asking about suicide does not increase the risk of suicide. Asking does not plant ideas in a person's mind. On the contrary, it decreases the risk by opening dialogue.

A depressed individual thinking of suicide is often profoundly ashamed and either unaware of the presence of mental illness or uninformed about the power of treatment to restore hope and health. We need to talk about suicide to understand it and prevent it.

Students are the ones who will notice a change in a friend's behavior. Four out of Five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs. This film and curriculum will teach students, teachers and parents the warning signs of depression and the warning signs that someone may be thinking of suicide. Anyone can IDENTIFY, ASK and LISTEN and GET HELP. Create a safety net by training your entire community. It is much like having everyone certified in CPR.

Teens are also the ones who often create pain for their peers intentionally or unintentionally. Their awareness, compassion and actions can change the culture in their schools. This can save lives.

This film also speaks directly to the youths who are experiencing a mental illness. It shows them that they are not alone. It encourages them to speak up and seek help.

To prevent suicide we need a cultural change: destigmatization, public education, and national conversation. Join us in starting this conversation.

Kiki Goshay & Jacqueline Monetta

About this Guide

This discussion guide is intended for students, parents, educators, administrators, and general audiences interested in organizing or facilitating a screening of the documentary NOT ALONE. The guide can be easily adapted for use in a variety of settings - from classroom, school, or community screenings, to after school programs, workshops, or informal groups, to professional development seminars for therapists and other mental health providers. Each suggested activity has been created to facilitate dialogue surrounding the issues of mental health, suicide prevention, and peer-to-peer awareness about the warning signs of suicide and depression.

Each of us has a role to play when it comes to fostering a supportive dialogue about mental illness and suicide prevention in young people. This guide provides information for all of the stakeholders in a young person's life, from teachers to doctors to parents to peers, so it is up to the host or facilitator to decide which activities are most useful and relevant for his or her event. Facilitators should consider audience, timeframe, and venue as they read through this guide.

The "Screening Guidelines" section offers activities for groups, families, or students before, during, and after watching the film. These activities are opportunities for viewers to make connections between the documentary and their own experiences, as well as to encourage a robust conversation. For screenings that are accompanied by a panel discussion, material from the "Questions for Further Discussion" can be used to prompt thoughtful dialogue. Because one of the primary objectives of the film is to inspire real-life change, there is a section of handouts that provide ways that individuals can become part of the solution - ways that can help each of us make a difference in the issues the film addresses - both individually and through established organizations. By engaging with this guide, audiences will deepen their understanding of the problem of teen suicide, and will be provided with the tools to be part of the solution.

About Big Picture Ed

Big Picture is a leader in the fields of film education and media literacy, specializing in resource development and educational outreach for film and media projects of all kinds. We leverage film as a powerful educational tool to enlighten audiences, spark engagement, inspire social change, and cultivate new generations of filmgoers and filmmakers. Our leadership shares over 25 years of experience in film, media literacy, curriculum development, community organizing, and education, and we bring this experience to bear for our clients, using their films to teach and edify complex and inspiring issues inside and beyond the classroom in savvy, substantive ways.

Hosting a Community, Classroom, or Campus Viewing of NOT ALONE

Hosting a viewing of Not Alone is a great way to initiate a compassionate, action-focused dialogue around the issue of mental illness and teen suicide in the United States, and universal access to quality mental health care. Your viewing might take place in a middle or high school classroom or auditorium, in your local public library, or as part of an afterschool or peer-to-peer program, on a university campus, at home, as part of a professional development workshop, as a kickoff for ongoing community dialogue or another setting. Whatever the occasion, this guide will serve as a roadmap for fruitful and comprehensive conversations about the film and the issues it raises.

Not Alone can be viewed in a variety of settings, with more or less facilitation, depending on your objectives, time frame, and audience. With larger groups, consider having a moderator. Your discussion might also benefit from including local experts, such as licenced therapists, counselors, teens with personal experience with mental health or suicide, or other community stakeholders to supplement the video content and address audience questions. Other modules to consider might include: a separate follow-up session for participants to create community engagement agendas; a workshop for a longer, more in-depth and participatory experience; piggybacking on a larger community event, or a formal classroom activity that spans multiple class periods. The following tips can help in the planning of a screening event.

When you decide what is right for you, we'd love to hear about it. Please share anecdotes, pictures, and/or videos from your event with us and we may showcase them on our website. Send your stories to info@bigpictureeducational.com

Pick the Tone

Your event can be anything you wish – from a campus-wide educational program, to a classroom assignment, to a family education event at your church or synagogue. It can be a call to action for your community, or an educational ‘salon’ that can start a meaningful conversation. Be creative, and don’t be afraid to customize your approach to fit your group of peers, neighbors, or colleagues.

Consider Timing and Agenda

This film can be used in a variety of settings, depending on your own needs and restrictions. Time is one of the most important considerations. The film itself is approximately 50 minutes, and for an effective event, you need to add at least 30 minutes before the film to set the tone, and 30 to 45 minutes after the film for a follow-up discussion and dialogue. To assist with the post-film discussion, you might consider inviting a moderator, or assembling a panel of local experts or stakeholders, such as licensed mental health providers, counselors, parents, students, or educators. If a 2- or 3 - hour event feels overwhelming, you might consider a series of two or three meetings, which would allow more time for an in-depth follow-up, or for the group to develop a community engagement plan. As you begin to envision your event, you should set the agenda and format depending on your desired outcomes.

Choose a Date

When picking the date and time for your screening, consider the academic calendar, holidays, and local events, as well as the general preferences of your invitees. A weeknight evening is often a good time to host an adults-only event, as it allows professionals to come straight from work and does not conflict with major weekend plans. But if you are considering a family-friendly event, a weekend evening or afternoon might be best. If you are choosing between days, do not hesitate to ask an expert, such as a local campus or community organizer, when they've had the most success with attendance.

Plan the Event

Four Weeks Prior

- ✓ Put together your invitation list.
- ✓ Design and mail or email your invitation. Make sure your invitation outlines all the details of your event: including the name of the film, and a description of the activities you have planned (panel discussion, moderated Q&A, open group dialogue, small group activities, etc.). If you are planning a potluck event, make sure you detail this expectation in your invitation as well.

Three Weeks Prior

- ✓ Plan the food and drinks if you are serving them. Will you serve drinks and light snacks? A full buffet meal? Do you need to rent tables, chairs, plates, glasses, and utensils, or purchase disposable ones?
- ✓ Prepare an agenda for your event. This can be as formal or as informal as you wish, but you should decide on the timing for arrivals, introductions, starting the film, and starting the post-film discussion or supplemental activities. Be sure to allow time for a bathroom and refreshment break after the film ends. This guide provides questions and discussion prompts for creating a unique, dynamic dialogue.

Two Weeks Prior

- ✓ Send out a reminder to those guests who have RSVP'd yes, or not RSVP'd at all.
- ✓ Consider providing RSVP'd guests with links to the film's website, the film's official Facebook or Twitter to set the tone, garner involvement in the issues, and get your guests excited about your event.
- ✓ If your event is happening in a school or classroom setting, prescreen the film with teachers and counselors. Discuss ways in which you will use the film to promote talk about mental health, and develop a plan for meeting the needs of students who seek help.

One Week Prior

- ✓ Purchase food, drinks, and other supplies as necessary.
- ✓ Set up your technology – whether it is a projector and screen or a simple TV and DVD player, you want to ensure you have it up and running before the day of the screening. You should also play through the entire DVD at least one time before your event to make sure there are no jumps, snags or scratches.
- ✓ Confirm with your invited guests one more time, and consider resending links to any late RSVPs.
- ✓ Prepare and practice an introduction to the film and a welcome to your event.

- ✓ Think through ways to best facilitate a productive dialogue around the film – including what your objectives for the conversation will be. Refer to the Screening Guidelines section of this guide for tips on how to prepare.
- ✓ Create a short, online evaluation form so you can collect feedback on your event. Sites such as [Survey Monkey](#) are great for simple, customized questionnaires.

The Day of the Event

- ✓ Test the tech before guests arrive. Give yourself ample time to test the DVD player, projector, and/or sound equipment to make sure everything will run smoothly.
- ✓ Arrange your space to accommodate your guests, and to create a welcoming space for a meaningful event and discussion.
- ✓ Don't forget your agenda. Make the most out of your time by following the agenda you created. Introduce the film and explain why you are bringing it to the group. Before the film starts, let your guests know that there will be a short discussion, panel discussion, or activities in small breakout groups afterwards.
- ✓ Distribute a handout with the list of local or national resources that individuals can contact if they need support, including phone numbers/email addresses, and, if a school counselor, classroom numbers.

Remember: If at any time you fear imminent harm, call 911.

The Day After

- ✓ Send a thank-you to all your guests and encourage them to continue the discussion and/or the action plan that was started at your event.
- ✓ Send a link to your online evaluation form to collect feedback from your guests.
- ✓ Send a link to a list of resources where individuals can get support if needed.

Additional Tips for Hosting NOT ALONE in a Classroom Setting

If your screening takes place in a classroom, there are some additional things to consider, to ensure that your screening is impactful, safe, and productive.

Prepare all necessary resources to ensure a safe and effective screening.

Have all support information at the ready, so students who might be inspired to ask for help can do so. Resources should include a comprehensive list for students who need help, with all appropriate referrals and a safety plan. Provide the phone number and hours of operation for your local mobile crisis service. If your screening is taking place in a classroom, in addition to the list of local resources, prepare a handout for students with a list of school counselors and teachers that they can go to if they need immediate support. Include phone numbers, email addresses, and classroom numbers.

Involve The Parent Community

Some students may be silent at school but willing to open up to a parent or caregiver. Therefore, equip the parents and caregivers with as much information as you can. Consider sending an informational packet home that includes The Warning Signs, the resource list you prepared for your screening, and Guidelines for Talking About Suicide. Provide information about ways in which they can help promote an open and caring environment at home, so that students can discuss the film and their feelings. If possible, consider holding a second screening of the film specifically for parents and caregivers, followed by a panel or Q&A with local mental health experts.

Involve A Peer Leadership Group

Peers are one of the greatest resources in preventing suicide. Youth leadership groups can affect the culture in your school. They can destigmatize mental illness and create an open environment around mental health. Have the Peer Leadership Group see the film and go over the curriculum in advance of your screening. Consider pairing a teen with a counselor or teacher on the day of the screening to lead the discussion before and after the class watches the film. We encourage a strong adult presence and oversight with youth groups and activities.

Prepare a School Mental Health Team

A school counselor or mental health professional must be available on site the day of screening. Have all the counselor(s) present introduce themselves before the screening. Because the film encourages youths to seek help, it is imperative that help is easy to access. Students who can relate to the pain that the subjects in the film describe may be ready to talk. Some will recognize that a friend exhibits some of the warning signs. Watching the film and discussing the feelings and actions of the subjects in the film will help youths identify themselves or their friends as needing help. This may be the only time an individual is ready to open up. If they are ready, they must receive the help they need.

Prepare the Students Ahead of Time

Have students fill out the pre-film questionnaire. Have the students hold onto the questionnaire until after the film. Engage in some of the activities listed in the Pre-Viewing

section of this guide to get students communicative and reflective before you press “play.” Explain that the film can be difficult to watch. Explain that they will be seeing real teens explaining their pain and struggles with mental illness and thoughts of suicide. Give students permission to leave the room to go to the counselor’s office or another quiet place if they need to. Some students will hear/see things that remind them of a friend or themselves. It can bring up difficult feelings and some may be very emotional.

Create Groundrules for Creating A Safe Space

Before and after the screening, it is imperative that there are groundrules for productive dialogue, so students feel safe sharing their feelings. To do this, encourage validation and compassionate listening. Talk for a few moments about the importance of being compassionate listeners when you discuss the film. Set guidelines around the kinds of comments or responses that are acceptable. Encourage the students to open up their hearts and their minds to each other. Foster an environment of caring compassionate listening. See the “Listening” section of this guide for additional ideas.

Be Alert to Student Responses

Follow your school’s protocol around suicide prevention and risk assessment. Engage in active observation, inquiry, listening, and intervention. If you observe a teen and feel he/she exhibits some of the warning signs or seems to be struggling, initiate a conversation. Ask if he/she feels depressed or has thoughts of suicide.

Empower the Students to Be Agents of Change and Hope

You can empower students with important information on the warning signs of mental illnesses and suicide risk. They are the ones who will notice when someone’s behavior or mood is different. Encourage them to ask, listen and intervene. Give them clear, instructions on how to intervene by telling them WHO THEY CAN COME TO if they learn that someone is depressed or having thoughts of suicide. BE SPECIFIC. Emphasize the importance of seeing a professional. Restore hope by referring to the students in the film and their recovery and success turning things around. Connect that student to the appropriate professional. Remind youths of their role: to listen, to understand, to serve as a touchstone for the restoration of hope. Persuade them to stay safe. Intervene. Bring the friend to someone who can help. Most importantly, emphasize that they are not alone and MUST SEEK HELP from a trusted adult.

Prepare and Distribute Resources to Take Home

Before the students leave, give them each a copy of the handouts in the “Handouts and Appendices” section of this guide. In addition, distribute the handout with local and school-based resources and contact numbers that you prepared. Introduce the members of your mental health team (counselors, psychologists) and peer leadership group who are present, and reinforce that these people are resources and are here to help. If you have time, go over these handouts and clarify any questions.

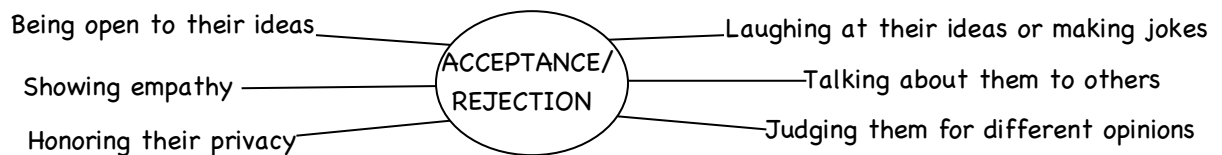
Screening Guidelines

The following screening guidelines can be used when hosting a viewing of the film. They also can be used as a group activity after individuals have seen the film independently, or in a classroom or lecture hall. The pre-viewing activities help facilitators make the most out of the screening, and the post-viewing discussion prompts can help transition viewers from absorbing information, to analytical thinking, and then towards empowerment so that they can all be agents of change and prevention.

Pre-Screening Activities

1. Begin by writing the following words on the chalkboard or on chart paper: ACCEPTANCE / REJECTION. Draw a circle around the two words.
2. Ask for a volunteer to offer a definition of the word “acceptance.” How does it feel to be accepted by your peers? Your family? Your community? Then, ask for examples that show how a person might treat others (friends, siblings, parents, teachers, yourself) with ACCEPTANCE and RESPECT. Take a moment to discuss REJECTION. What are some of the consequences of being or feeling rejected or disrespected? How does it feel to be rejected, or not accepted, by your friends, family, or others? Ask for examples of how a person might show REJECTION or treat others with DISRESPECT.
3. Conduct a short brainstorm with the class and record the student responses as a word-map on the chalkboard or on chart paper. Record examples of “respect” on the left hand side and the examples for “disrespect” on the right. If there are relevant examples not offered by the class, suggest them and add them to the word map.

Note: At the end of the brainstorm session, the word map might look something like this:



4. Conduct a short, whole-group discussion. Use the following questions as a guide:
 - What happens to a discussion when one of the people starts treating the other with disrespect?
 - Why might someone treat another person with disrespect? What would cause them to act that way?
 - What needs to be in place in order for people to treat each other with respect?
 - What sorts of benefits might come from treating others with respect?
 - What sorts of consequences might come from treating others with disrespect?
 - What specific steps can we take to ensure that we treat each other with respect within the walls of this discussion?

5. Explain that the film they are about to view addresses a difficult and sometimes personal topic, and that, in order to create a productive learning environment, each person in the group needs to honor, accept, and respect one another's opinions and perspectives.
6. Ask the group what they know about depression, mental illness, and suicide.
7. Conduct a brief discussion, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:
 - What is depression?
 - What do you know about mental illness?
 - How would you know if you or one of your friends had thoughts of suicide?
 - What would you do if you or one of your friends had thoughts of suicide?
 - Do you have a safe space where you can talk to someone about your feelings?
 - What are some coping mechanisms you use, or can use, to help when you're feelings of despair?
 - When you think of a friend or peer who is suffering from feelings of despair, suicide, sadness, or depression, what are some of the resources – or SAFETY NETS – that are available to him or her? What are some of the ways that they might feel invisible, neglected, or dismissed – the CRACKS where they could fall through in the system?
8. Explain to the group that the film they are about to see is the story of one teen's effort to better understand the epidemic of suicide and mental illness among her peers. Display the following graphic organizer on a screen, or copy it onto a white board, chalkboard, or on a piece of chart paper so the group can see it. Alternatively, make copies of it and distribute it to the group.

ADVOCATES and ALLIES	RESOURCES or "SAFETY NETS"	DEFICIENCIES, or "CRACKS"
Teens, Peers, Friends, Self		
Adults, Authorities, Teachers, School, Parents		

9. Instruct the group to copy the graphic organizer onto a piece of paper. Explain that they will be taking notes on this chart as they watch the film. Whenever they see an example of a way that a member of one of the groups – young people or adults - can be an advocate or an interrupter when it comes to the negative outcomes of suicidal thoughts or mental illness, they should jot it down in the left hand box in that stakeholder's row. Similarly, if they see an example of a way that they might have missed or exacerbated an instance, they should jot it in the right hand box of that row. Encourage viewers to be thoughtful and make additional connections as they

watch, to their own experiences or others, as these notes will help to inform their post-viewing discussion.

10. In addition, ask viewers to write any other thoughts, reactions, or questions that come up for them as they watch on the reverse side of their paper.
11. Let viewers know that you will not be collecting their writings, but that they are for their own use to help them remember what they were thinking as they watched the film, and help recall specific examples and instances in the post-viewing discussion.

Post-Viewing Discussion Prompts

1. Conduct a whole group discussion on the film they just watched, using some or all of the following questions as a guide:

Mental Illness Awareness

- What is depression?
- Did you learn anything about mental illness or suicide that surprised you?
- What are some of the common misconceptions that teens experiencing depression or thoughts of suicide often have?
- What are some signs that you may be suffering from a mental illness like depression or anxiety?

Advocacy and Seeking Help

- What should you do if you feel a friend may have depression or thoughts of suicide?
- If you had a friend who confided in you, about feelings of depression or thoughts of suicide, who would you bring that friend to for help?
- Would you be worried about betraying a friend's trust if you told an adult that you saw the signs of mental illness or thoughts of suicide in a friend? Has this feeling changed since you saw the film?
- What would you risk if you told an adult about a friend who confided in you? What would you be risking if you didn't?
- Who would you go to if you felt you were experiencing some mental illness like depression or anxiety?

Changing the Culture

- What can you do, as a student, to help your fellow students?
- How can you work to de-stigmatize mental illness in your community and circle of peers?
- What can you do, as an adult stakeholder, to help the young people in your sphere of influence?
- What can you do to make the environment at this school more open and caring?
- How can this school support students who are experiencing a mental illness, or feelings of rejection, disrespect, or alienation?
- Have you ever seen someone sitting alone and asked to join them?
- When you think of a friend or peer who is suffering from feelings of despair, suicide, sadness, or depression, what are some of the resources – or SAFETY NETS – that are available to him or her? What are some of the ways that they might feel invisible, neglected, or dismissed – the CRACKS where they could fall through in the system?

How might you direct that person towards the safety nets to ensure they get the help they need?

Social Media

- How does social media affect people when they are feeling down?
- Has social media ever caused you to feel bad about yourself?
- Can you think of ways to promote good feelings on social media?
- Have you ever seen posts that would be hurtful to someone? If so, what have you done about it? After seeing this film, what do you know you can do?

Media Literacy

- Why are there no adults featured in the film? Do you think this was deliberate? Why or why not?
- What did you notice about the set that was used to film Jacqueline's interviews? How might the set design lend itself to active listening in such an intimate dialogue?

Listening

- Have you ever been engaged in a conversation when you wondered if the other person was listening to what you were saying? How did this make you feel – about yourself, and about the information you were trying to share?
- How can you model active listening with your friends, so that you can foster friendships of support and compassion?
-

A Special Section on LISTENING

Some of the teens in our film thought of suicide as a way to be seen, noticed, heard, understood, forgiven or loved. They didn't necessarily have a death wish. They saw suicide as way to gain attention or sympathy. Their behavior may have been a "cry for help" more than a true desire to die. Prior to filming all of Jacqueline's interviews, we filmed in the hallways, cafeteria, and classrooms of her high school. We noticed how almost every conversation at the lunch tables, by lockers, or between classes were interrupted by text messages, emails and other distractions. In the cafeteria and common student areas, tables of friends were not looking at each other. Someone might break out in laughter while reading a private message – he or she might share the message with the rest of the people at the table, or might not. There was a shocking lack of continual, engaged conversation – as if each person was in his/her own world, mumbling bits and pieces of what she was reading or thinking. It was all very disconnected. Even when walking down the hallway, students were missing the opportunity to see each other, greet one another, acknowledge each other because they were looking down at a device as they made their way to their classes.

“

**In a world that is so 'connected',
why do we feel so alone?**

”

Active Listening

For teens to help each other, they must become “active listeners.” The way to improve your listening skills is to practice "active listening." This is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, try to understand the complete message being sent. In order to do this you must pay attention to the other person very carefully. You cannot allow yourself to become distracted by whatever else may be going on around you, or by forming counter arguments that you'll make when the other person stops speaking. Nor can you allow yourself to get bored, and lose focus on what the other person is saying. All of these contribute to a lack of listening and understanding. To be a better listener, and in turn, a better friend, advocate, or ally, follow these 4 Rules of Active Listening. They are explained in more detail in the handout “Active Listening Tactics and Goals” in the “Handouts and Appendices” section of this Guide. The Four Rules of Active Listening Are:

1. Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.
2. Be non judgmental
3. Give your undivided attention to the speaker
4. Use silence effectively

Listening Exercises

Here are some listening skills exercises that should help one develop the listening skills needed for effective communication. These are fun, interactive, and can also be used for ice breakers to set the tone as part of a pre-viewing discussion.

1. Distribute the handout “Active Listening: Tactics and Goals” to the group. Briefly read and review its contents aloud.
2. Explain that the group will be participating in some exercises to promote active listening skills. Remind the group that ACTIVE LISTENING is perhaps the most powerful individual strategy one can employ when it comes to preventing suicide.
3. Choose one or more of the following activities to facilitate with the group in pairs, a whole group, or in small groups.
4. After completing an exercise, reconvene as a whole group and conduct a quick debrief. Refer back to the handout to discuss what strategies were employed, or not employed, and how this affected communication and emotion, to reinforce the learning.

Pair Share: HOBBIES. Pair up participants, and have one person discuss a hobby or passion of theirs, while the other person is instructed to ignore them. Discuss the frustration that can come with not feeling heard or acknowledged, and review good body language and verbal remarks a good listener should practice.

Pair Share: DREAM VACATION. In pairs, one participant discusses a type of location they'd like to visit, giving only subtle hints as to the specific place. The listener will have to pick up on these subtleties and at the end, recommend somewhere suitable for the speaker based on their explanation. The original speaker will confirm or deny the usefulness of the suggestion, and the two will then discuss ways people can stay alert, as a listener, and pick up on the appropriate cues to help them play a more vital role in discussions.

Whole Group: GROUP STORYTELLING. Arrange the group in a circle. Assign one person as the moderator, who will deliver the story's first line. The first line should be something simple, and open for many possible continuations, such as, “So the other day, I went to the store.” Continue around the circle, allowing each participant in the circle to contribute a single sentence that logically continues from the last. Meanwhile, the group moderator should be keeping track of the story on a computer or in a notepad, checking each addition for possible continuity errors. Most of the time, there will be a few additions that contradict previous parts of the story. The moderator should hold out on identifying these until the full story has been dictated, and can be read aloud to the group. Then, the group can discuss how these mistakes were made, and what sorts of listening skills they should practice to ensure important information is never forgotten.

Whole Group: SELECTIVE LISTENING. One moderator should compose a list of objects or ideas, all similar in theme. For example: turkey, lettuce, tomato, mayo, mustard, cheese, etc. These are all sandwich components, and most people will recognize this. The list should be relatively long, maybe 15 to 20 words, and have some repeated words. For example: turkey, lettuce, tomato, mayo, mustard, cheese, ham, lettuce, pickles, onion, olives, lettuce... The moderator should read this list to the group, and then allot them 30 seconds to write down as many words as they can remember. Most people will remember the word that was repeated the most, and a notable amount will most likely write down words that were obvious, but not actually stated in the list. For example: bread, sandwich, or food.

Small Group: SIMULTANEOUS CONVERSATIONS. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3 people. Instruct one person to stand in the middle, with the other two people on either side. Give one person on the outside a mundane topic, and the other a different mundane topic, for example, one person is assigned "helicopters" and the other person is assigned "farm animals." Instruct the people on the outside to talk NONSTOP about their given topic to the person in the middle. The person in the middle is to try to maintain both conversations as best they can. Instruct the person in the middle to turn towards the person in the group that they are listening to as they toggle back and forth. Continue for two minutes and then rotate positions until all three members have had a turn in the middle. When the exercise is complete, as part of your debrief, ask the group: how did you feel when the person in the middle turned away from you when you were talking? How would you feel if you had been talking about something important, not just a mundane topic?

HANDOUTS and APPENDICES

Signs That You May Have a Mental Illness Like Depression or Anxiety

- Lack of interest or pleasure in doing things
- Feeling down or hopeless
- Trouble falling or staying asleep or sleeping too much
- Feeling tired or having little energy
- Poor appetite, overeating or considerable weight changes
- Feeling bad about yourself - that you are a failure or having a lot of guilt
- Trouble concentrating on things or making decisions
- Moving or speaking slowly, so that other people have noticed, or being so restless that you've been moving around a lot
- Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself in some way
- Agitation, excessive crying, irritability or social isolation
- Feeling nothing or blah, numb
- Doing anything in excess, especially online (facebook, gambling, shopping)
- Neglecting your personal appearance or physical well being

Warning Signs of Suicide Risk

- Talking about wanting to die or kill oneself or having thoughts about it
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Statements that life is not worth living
- Talking about feeling hopelessness about one's life or future
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Seeming to say goodbye
- Giving away possessions or otherwise making preparations
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or reckless
- Isolation and withdrawal
- Displaying extreme mood swings
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Loss of Interest in things once enjoyed
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Reckless behavior
- Personality Change
- Physical Pain (complaints about physical symptoms related to emotions like headaches, stomachaches, fatigue etc.)

Guidelines for Talking About Suicide

If you see any of the signs of suicidal thoughts, start by ASKING and LISTENING.

ASK

“Are you thinking of suicide or have you been thinking about suicide?”

LISTEN

Just listen. Try to understand. Do not give solutions. Validate the person’s experience and feelings fully. Tell them you care and are concerned about them and they are not alone.

GET HELP

You do not need to do this alone. In fact, you can’t do it alone. Your friend needs professional help. Bring them to a trusted adult, mental health professional or school counselor. Go together if you can. While they may promise they feel better after talking with you, **YOU STILL NEED TO SEEK HELP**. Often a person having thoughts of suicide feels embarrassed or ashamed because they do not realize their feelings are due to an illness. They don’t realize that treatment can help them overcome these feelings. Connecting your friend to someone who can help can save their life. There are many resources available. Here are just a few:

24 Hour National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Phone: 1-800-273-8255

Online chat: <http://chat.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>

24 Hour Crisis Text Line

Online: <http://www.crisistextline.org/textline/>

Text: Text HOME to 741741

The Caring Adults in Your World

Reach out to your school counselors, a trusted teacher or coach, your parents, your friends’ parents. They are all there because they want to help you.

Tips for Parents and Caregivers

If you are concerned about your son or daughter, ask yourself the following questions. Has your son or daughter exhibited any of the following:

- Talking about wanting to die, be dead, or about suicide, or are they cutting or burning themselves?
- Feeling like things may never get better, seeming like they are in terrible emotional pain (like something is wrong deep inside but they can't make it go away), or they are struggling to deal with a big loss in their life?
- Withdrawing from everyone and everything, becoming more anxious or on edge, seeming unusually angry, or just not seeming normal to you?

**If you checked ANY of the above,
OR if your gut is telling you something might be wrong,
get them professional help.**



Pre-Screening Questionnaire

Read each statement below. Then, check the box to the right that best represents your understanding of that statement. Is it true? False? Or, are you unsure?

STATEMENT	TRUE	FALSE	UNSURE
Young people can experience a mental illness.			
All people who have depression have suffered a trauma.			
There is nothing you can do to stop depression.			
There are often signs that someone may be thinking of suicide.			
The only thing I can do as a friend, is listen.			
Being a good friend may require that I tell a trusted adult something very personal that my friend told me.			
Self harm is a sign that someone is experiencing a mental illness.			
People experiencing a mental illness often don't realize that their condition can be treated.			
Hopelessness is a sign of depression.			
I know how to get help for myself or a friend who is thinking of suicide.			

Student Screening Form

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Grade in School _____

Answer each question by checking the most accurate answer to the right – YES or NO.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Are you currently being treated for depression or another mental illness?		
In the last four weeks, has there been a time when nothing was fun for you and you just weren't interested in anything?		
Do you feel like you have less energy than you usually do?		
Do you feel you can't do anything well or that you are not as good-looking or as smart as most other people?		
Have you ever thought seriously about killing yourself?		
Have you tried to kill yourself in the last year?		
Do you feel hopeless?		
In the last four weeks has it seemed like you couldn't think as clearly or as fast as usual?		

BECOMING AN ACTIVE LISTENER: TACTICS AND GOALS

4 Active Listening GOALS

1. Seek to understand before seeking to be understood. When we seek to understand rather than be understood, our focus will be on LISTENING. Often, when we enter into conversation, our goal is to be better understood. We can be better understood, if first we better understand. With age, maturity, and experience comes silence. It is most often a wise person who says little or nothing at the beginning of a conversation or listening experience. We need to remember to collect information before we disseminate it. We need to know it before we say it.
2. Be non judgmental. Empathetic listening demonstrates a high degree of emotional intelligence. If we would speak to anyone about issues important to them, we need to avoid sharing our judgment until we have learned their judgment.
3. Give your undivided attention to the speaker. Absolutely important is dedicating your undivided attention to the speaker if you are to succeed as an active listener. Eye contact is less important. In most listening situations people use eye contact to affirm listening. The speaker maintains eye contact to be sure the listener or listeners are paying attention. From their body language the speaker can tell if he is speaking too softly or loudly, too quickly or slowly, or if the vocabulary or the language is inappropriate. Listeners can also send messages to speakers using body language. Applause is the reason many performers perform. Positive feedback is an endorphin releaser for the giver and the sender. Eye contact can be a form of positive feedback.
4. Use silence effectively. The final rule for active or empathic listening is to effectively use silence. Too often a truly revealing moment is never brought to fruition because of an untimely interruption. Some of the finest police interrogators, counselors, teachers and parents learn more by maintaining silence than by asking questions. As an active or empathic listener, silence is a very valuable tool. DO NOT interrupt unless absolutely necessary. Silence can be painful. It is more painful for a speaker than for a listener. If someone is speaking, and we want them to continue talking, we do not interrupt. Rather, we do provide positive feedback using body language, eye contact, and non word sounds like "umh, huh". Silence is indeed golden especially when used to gather information as a listener.

5 Active Listening TACTICS

1. Show That You're Listening
 - Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.
 - Nod, smile and use other facial expressions.
 - Note your posture and make sure it is open and inviting.
 - Encourage the speaker to continue with small verbal comments like yes, and uh huh.

2. Provide Feedback
 - Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.
 - Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is," and "Sounds like you are saying," are great ways to reflect back.
 - Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say." "Is this what you mean?"
 - Summarize the speaker's comments periodically.

3. Defer Judgment
 - Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits full understanding of the message.
 - Allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions.
 - Don't interrupt with counter arguments.

4. Respond Appropriately
 - Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.
 - Be candid, open, and honest in your response.
 - Assert your opinions respectfully.
 - Treat the other person in a way that you think he or she would want to be treated.

5. Validate the Speaker
 - Focus on listening with empathy and genuine concern, being careful to stay in the moment.
 - Display interest through verbal and nonverbal cues: Nod and maintain eye contact, and use verbal replies such as "Uh-huh" and "What else are you feeling?"
 - Respond with accurate reflection, summarizing what the individual had shared. For example, "It sounds like you are angry that your mom made these plans without consulting you."
 - Restate the person's feelings and behaviors in relation to past and present situations and issues. Acknowledge that his or her current emotions are understandable in light of past experiences and/or present circumstances.