

Working with schools to implement suicide prevention activities

Critical incident service

(Educational Psychology and Specialist Support)

- Provide support in a critical incident
- Provide consultation in regard to bereavement and trauma
- Provide training in regard to critical incidents, bereavement and trauma

Since 2018:

Provide training in regard to self-harm and suicide prevention

Provide training and support in regard to teaching about mental health and emotional well-being



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This workshop

- 1. What to do if you believe a child is at risk of suicide - implementing effective procedures
- 2. Teaching about mental health and emotional well-being to address key issues
- 3. Supporting school communities following the death of a young person through suspected suicide



Young people at risk of suicide

- % of adolescents who have made a suicide attempt
- % of adolescents who have thought about suicide at some stage in their life
- % of teachers who report that on average a student shares suicidal thoughts with them once a term or more



What guidance is provided in your local authority?

- How do people working with children and young people know how to respond to children and young people who may be at risk of suicide?
- What works?
- What could be better?
- How do people know what to do?



What to do if you believe a child might be at risk of suicide

(see Norfolk Safeguarding Partnership Website)

- Introduction
- Principles and values
- Definitions
- Identifying risk factors
- Referral pathway including sample safety plan

- Important things to remember
- Young people who do not engage
- Engagement with parents and carers
- Appendix 1 Information gathering conversation and flowchart
- Appendix 2 The links between self-harm and suicide
- Appendix 3 Guidance on sharing information
- Appendix 4 Roles and responsibilities
- Appendix 5 Useful national organisations/websites



If a young person's presentation/behaviour causes concern that they may have suicidal thoughts or intent, have an **information gathering conversation**. Feel free to adapt the questions appropriate to the young person's needs, and ask other relevant questions.

- Tell me, is something troubling you (home, family, school, friends)? Or: I am aware that you have talked about xxx, tell me a bit more... how is this making you feel?
- How often have you had these thoughts?
- Are other people also worried about you? Who, why?
- Have you ever felt like hurting yourself? Have you ever hurt yourself?
- Have you ever felt like ending your life?

Then, suicide specific questions if appropriate, e.g. Do you have a plan?

Further questions.

General questions

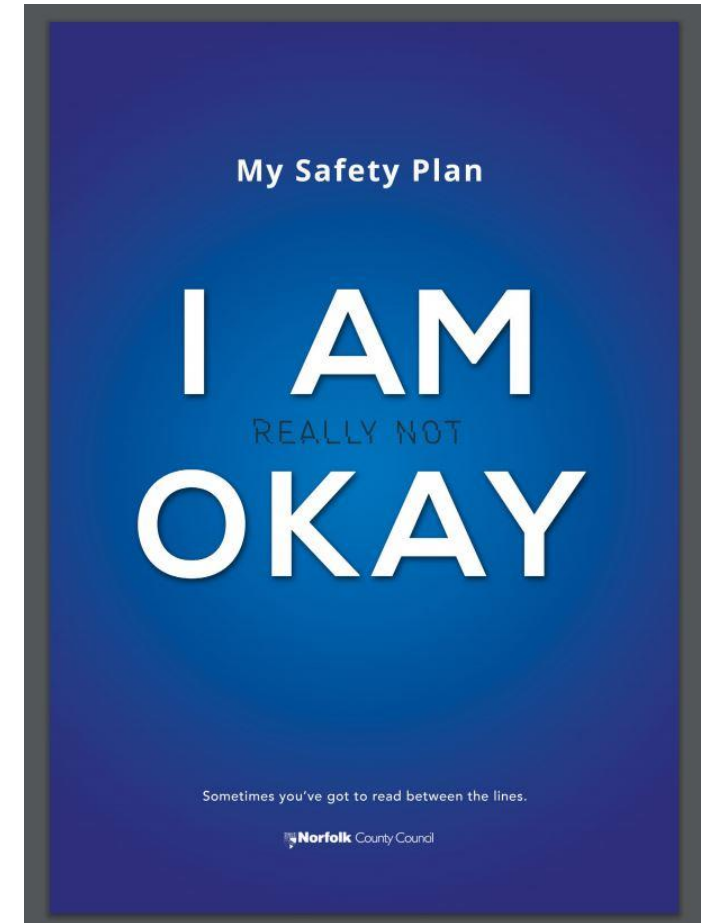
Do safety plan – agree what will happen next



Sample Safety plan

It is best to have someone complete this before a crisis so they can refer to it as a protective measure.

- **1. Warning signs of crisis**
- **2. Coping strategies – what I can do to take my mind off it**
- **3. Who or what is good in my life**
- **4. Contact details of someone who I trust to get help**
- **5. Contact details of agencies I can get help from**
- **6. What makes life worth living**
- **7.**



Feedback

- Helpful tool for having conversations with young people
- Useful guidance for primary school staff who rarely have conversations of this nature
- Permission to talk about suicide - name it – be frank
- Contact numbers to have consultations with CAMHS staff when concerned

Challenges:

- getting a timely response from CAMHS
- differing views around immediate risk



What do you think?

Training for staff working with children and young people

- What is available in your area?
- Is this specific to children/young people/does it need to be?



Training course – half day or twilight, also offered in school (funded)

- Overview of self-harm
- Reasons for self-harming behaviour
- Support to be offered by school staff to young people and families
- Risk of self-harm and young people at risk of suicide
- Young people who die by suicide (Manchester study)
- What to do if you believe a child is at risk of suicide
- Case studies
- Digital influences (self-harm and suicide)
- Good practice for supporting children with self-harm
- Local support available
- A whole school approach to supporting children with MH issues



Teaching about mental health and emotional well-being to address key issues

What do the schools you know teach about? What resources do they use?



- You are never too young to learn about mental health (Anna Freud Centre)
- Teaching about emotional health and well-being (primary) – PSHE Association
- Teaching about emotional health and well-being (secondary) – PSHE Association
- DEAL – Developing emotional awareness and listening: Samaritans teaching resources
- Rise Above for schools (Public health):
https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools/topics/rise-above/overview?WT.mc_id=RiseAboveforSchools PSHEA EdComs Resource listing Sep17
- Any others?



Does it work?

There is mixed evidence of the effectiveness of school based suicide prevention programmes (Ploeg et al. in De Silva, Parker et al. 2013).

The programme 'The Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) programme', which was one of the interventions in the 'Saving and Empowering Young Lives in Europe' randomized controlled trial, showed a significant and sustainable decrease in suicide attempts (Wasserman, Hoven et al. 2015).

The Anna Freud Centre is currently completing further research in a randomly controlled trial.



Why do we think it may make a difference?



Children's commissioner: children's voices (October 2017)

- Children conceptualise mental health in highly stereotyped, negative and limited terms
- Children's help-seeking behaviour is affected by their lack of knowledge and inability to relate the information they have to their own mental health
- Children are unaware of the availability and purpose of mental health services, including in their own school



- Universal social emotional and behaviour programmes have been shown to improve young people's social and emotional skills, mental health problems and promotion of academic achievement (Sklad, Diekstra et al. 2012, p.905). There is also some limited evidence that mental health teaching programmes have the potential to have a positive impact on young people's understanding of mental health and increasing help-seeking intentions and behaviours (Naylor, Cowie et al. 2009, p.137).
- The 2016 progress report on preventing suicide in England (Services 2016, p.23) recommends the PSHE Association Teaching Programme, which was developed by the PSHE Association with funding from the government, as a suicide prevention activity.



New guidance: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Aim of teaching pupils about physical health and mental wellbeing:

- To give them the information they need to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing
- Recognise what is normal and what is an issue in themselves and others
- When issues arise, know how to seek support as early as possible from appropriate sources

(Physical health and well-being:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/physical-health-and-mental-wellbeing-primary-and-secondary>)



Teaching about mental health and emotional well-being (PSHE Association)

In a small-scale study with two Norfolk secondary schools

90% of young people said that their peers should learn about mental health through this programme

- Increased knowledge about mental health
- Mental health as a taboo subject
- Help-seeking behaviour
- Components of a helpful teaching programme



Increased knowledge about mental health

- Fewer children reported they knew 'nothing' or a 'a little' after the programme
- More young people reported they knew 'quite a bit' or 'a lot'

Very helpful to know this information if you ever go through it or you could help a friend.

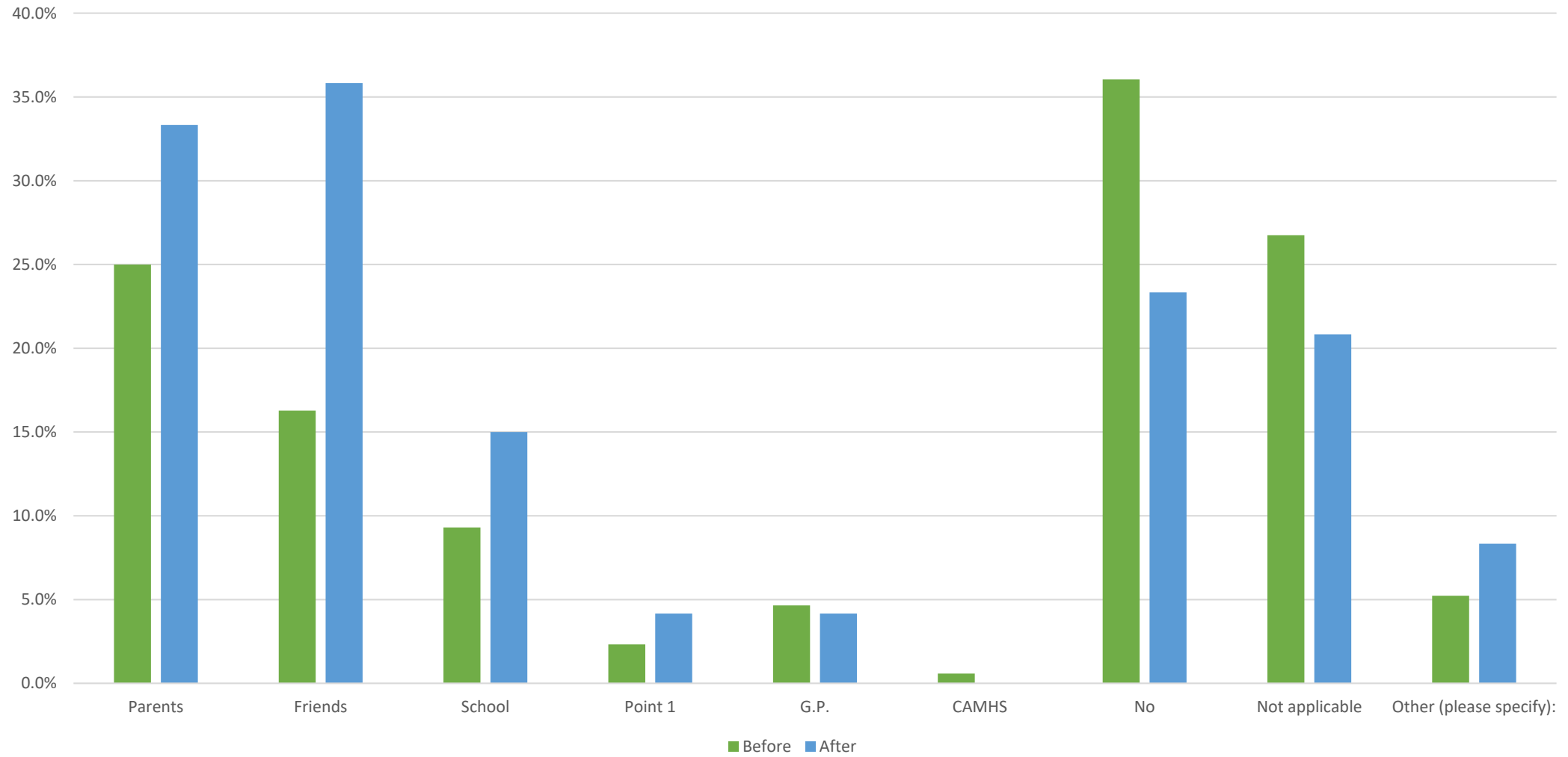
Mental health as a taboo subject

- Young people discussed mental health more with their friends
- Young people talked more about their own mental health issues with others, in particular school and friends
- Fewer children said they didn't have any mental health difficulties to share

I like it because it will help people get help and feel like they are not the only one.



Have you sought any help?



Help-seeking behaviour

- The proportion of young people who reported they had sought help from parents, friends and school increased significantly
- The proportion of young people who said they hadn't accessed any help, or where the question was not applicable, had also decreased

I think it's good to talk about mental health and well-being because you can always go and see someone and get help through it



- *I think it's good to talk about mental health and wellbeing because you can always go and see someone about your mental health and they can get you help to get through it.*
- *I liked learning about how to deal with anxiety and depression because it helps me when I get stressed.*
- *I think that mental health is a main issue in our life and we need to learn more about it so we can help ourselves and others.*



Components of a helpful PSHE teaching programme

- Teachers who show understanding, are attentive and have a positive relationship with students
- Staff need to be mindful of young people with mental health difficulties (there needs to be an opportunity before the programme for students to identify themselves if they need support)
- Classroom behaviour needs to be managed appropriately
- Consistent teachers (not supply)
- The programme needs to be delivered in an engaging way



Revised PSHE teaching programme

- KS3 Lesson 1: Attitudes to mental health
- KS3 Lesson 2: Promoting emotional well-being
- KS3 Lesson 3: Digital resilience
- KS3 Lesson 4: Unhealthy coping strategies (self-harm and eating disorders)
- KS3 Lesson 5: Healthy coping strategies
- KS4 Lesson 1: New challenges
- KS4 Lesson 2: Reframing negative thinking
- KS4 Lesson 3: Recognising mental ill health and when to get help
- KS4 Lesson 4: Promoting emotional well-being



3. Supporting school communities following the death of a young person through suspected suicide

How are your schools supported?



Advice available

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-identifying-and-responding-to-suicide-clusters>
- <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/step-step-resources/responding-suspected-suicide-schools-and-colleges/>
- <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-schools/supporting-pupils-bereaved-by-suicide>
- <https://headspace.org.au/assets/School-Support/Compressed-Postvention-Toolkit-May-2012-FA2-LR.pdf>
- <https://papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/400734-Schools-guide-PAPYRUS.pdf>
- General advice re. supporting students following a death in the community also available from Child Bereavement UK and Winston's Wish
- Support available from your Educational Psychology Service



Support available in Norfolk

- Immediate information received via children's services including out of hours/police or schools directly
- Information provided to the schools (incl. siblings) involved
- Schools involved in strategy meetings
- Immediate advice and support provided to school
- Identification of vulnerable students
- Advice re longer term support provided
- Supporting police in collecting information for the coroner
- Support to school at inquest
- LA Education Safeguarding Officer involved in Child death meetings and Child death overview panel to identify learning



What else?

- Part of the Suicide prevention strategy group
- Part of Suicide Bereavement sub group
- Liaising with other services involved in mental health support, in particular in relation to schools
- Keeping up to date with research about suicide prevention – children & young people/ schools



What could we do better? What are your challenges?

- More staff to attend training
 - Schools to teach about mental health and emotional well-being
 - Sharing of information in the early stages, in particular re. cause of death
-
- Improving access to mental health services



What next?

Review what we do
Await new research

Additional mental health support for young people, e.g.
through mental health support in school teams



Thank you



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