

Gilbert H. Hood Middle School
5 Hood Rd.
Derry, New Hampshire 03038

West Running Brook Middle School
1 West Running Brook Lane
Derry, New Hampshire 03038

February 12, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The adolescent years are sometimes characterized by a roller-coaster ride of emotions which are often difficult for youth, their parents, and educators. It is easy to misread depression as normal adolescent turmoil; however, depression appears to be occurring at a much earlier age. Depression, which is treatable, is a leading risk factor for suicide. In addition, self-injury has become an increasing problem among youth.

To proactively address these issues, the Derry middle schools will be conducting depression awareness and suicide prevention training as part of the SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program with all students. This Program has proven to be successful at increasing help-seeking behaviors by students concerned about themselves or a friend and is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide.

Our goals in participating in this program are straightforward:

- To help our students understand that depression is a treatable illness
- To explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression
- To provide students training in how to identify serious depression and potential suicidality in themselves or a friend
- To impress upon youth that they can help themselves or a friend by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- To help students know who in school they can turn to for assistance.

Please join us for an SOS Signs of Suicide® Prevention Program information meeting that we are offering for both middle schools' parents and/or guardians on Thursday, February 18, at 6:30 pm in the West Running Brook Cafeteria.

If you have any questions or concerns about this program, please feel free to contact us at our schools.

Sincerely,

GHH: Trisha Digirolamo, Jerry Kearns, and Jennifer Ayotte 432-1224
WRB: Phil Baroody and Cheri Haidaichuk 432-1250