

## Case Study

### The Evidence Behind SOS Signs of Suicide

How SOS Signs of Suicide has shown a reduction in self-reported suicide attempts by up to 64%.

## Overview

Since the program's inception, researchers have assessed the effectiveness of SOS by conducting several randomized controlled trials - an evaluation known as the "gold standard" of research studies.

SOS trials were completed in 2004, 2007, 2014, and 2016, evaluating a total of 5,400 students in grades 6-12.

Each trial compared the results of students who received SOS training to a control group who did not participate in the program.

### Is SOS appropriate for all students?

Yes, SOS has shown to be effective across entire student populations. Following SOS, students report more favorable attitudes for getting help for themselves or a friend.

### Is SOS appropriate for high-risk students?

Yes, SOS may actually interrupt progression from suicidal thoughts, helping those who are already high risk.

2004 & 2007

## Evaluating the SOS Suicide Prevention Program

Researchers measured the short-term impact of SOS using 4,000 high school students. Three months after half the group received SOS training, both groups completed a short questionnaire.

The group who received SOS reported **40% fewer suicide attempts, greater knowledge of depression and suicide, and more adaptive attitudes** towards these issues. These findings were consistent in subsequent studies.

Sources: Aseltine, Robert H. Jr, PhD and Robert DeMartino, MD. (2004). "An Outcome Evaluation of the SOS Suicide Prevention Program." American Journal of Public Health. Vol 94, No 3, 446-51. Aseltine, Robert H. Jr, Amy James, Elizabeth A. Schilling, and Jaime Glanovsky. (2007) "Evaluating the SOS suicide prevention program: a replication and extension." BMC Public Health. 7: 161.

2014

## SOS Shows Promise as a Middle School Suicide Prevention Program

Researchers worked with 400 6th-8th grade students from diverse populations and backgrounds, with students completing a pre-test survey, then taking a post-test survey three months later.

Results showed that students who reported suicidal ideation in the pre-test before receiving SOS training were **96% less likely to report engaging in suicidal behaviors** after participating in the program, versus their peers who reported previous suicidal ideation and did not receive SOS.

**"This indicates that SOS may, for some students with suicidal ideation, interrupt the progression from suicidal ideation to more active stages of contemplation, planning, and attempt."**

Source: Schilling, Elizabeth A., PhD, Martha Lawless, BA, Laurel Buchanan, MA, and Robert H. Aseltine Jr, PhD. (2014). "'Signs of Suicide' Shows Promise as a Middle School Suicide Prevention Program." Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior. 44(6): 653-67.

2016

## Further Evidence of SOS Efficacy & Effectiveness

Researchers sought to replicate prior SOS studies, using 1,000 9th grade students to further assess the program. Students completed a pre-test survey, then took a post-test survey three months later.

The results showed that students who received SOS training were approximately **64% less likely to report engaging in a suicide attempt** than the control group.

Source: Schilling, Elizabeth A., Robert H. Aseltine Jr, and Amy James. (2016). "The SOS Suicide Prevention Program: Further Evidence of Efficacy and Effectiveness." Prevention Science. 17(2):157-166.