



Life-saving suicide prevention training for school communities

Youth suicide rates are rising, and nearly 1 in 5 students say they've seriously considered suicide in the past year. How can we keep them safe? **With the right knowledge and skills, school communities can be a lifeline of hope for students.**

The California Department of Education (CDE), in partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE), is working to realize this vision. We've partnered with LivingWorks, a leading developer of suicide prevention training, to provide life-saving skills training for teachers, staff, and students. It's called LivingWorks Start: a 90-minute online program that equips people to recognize when someone is struggling and take action to keep them safe.

LivingWorks Start: A closer look

- Works on any computer, smartphone, or tablet
- Includes information and practice to build skills
- Custom content designed for education and youth settings
- Evidence-based training shown to improve readiness
- For ages 13 and up

How we'll be rolling out LivingWorks Start

County offices of education will distribute LivingWorks Start to their school districts so they can provide this program to middle and high school teachers and staff. Once educators are trained, the next wave of training will include students.

To learn more or access LivingWorks Start in your county:

Frequently asked questions

Why is this training being offered?

California Assembly Bill (AB) -1808 added Section 216 to the California Education Code and provided funding to ensure school staff were prepared to identify, support, and refer middle and high school students who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide. The bill also called for the training to be offered to middle and high school students. The SDCOE was selected as the lead to make this online training available, at no cost, to local educational agencies (LEAs) to voluntarily use as part of their youth suicide prevention policy. Suicide is one of the most significant health risks for youth today, but it can also be prevented if people know the warning signs and school communities take measures to build hopeful, supportive environments. Skills training is essential to make this possible, and this is why we are launching LivingWorks Start.

When will students be trained?

LivingWorks Start will be rolled out in two stages. The first stage will target staff so they are well-equipped to identify students who might have suicide ideation and so they are prepared to support students when they take the training. LivingWorks Start will then be made available to students in fall 2020.

How do trainees use their LivingWorks Start skills?

LivingWorks Start is designed to equip people with the knowledge and skills to recognize when someone—a friend, family member, student, or co-worker—is experiencing thoughts of suicide. Learners are equipped to ask that person directly, engage them in a brief conversation to show they are taking the issue seriously, and then connect them to help, such as a counselor, mental health professional or a crisis line. As more and more people are trained, they develop a “safety network” for their school communities, making it more likely that someone’s distress will be identified and they can be kept safe.

Is LivingWorks Start safe?

Suicide can be a challenging subject. LivingWorks Start is deliberately presented in a positive, hope-oriented way to minimize the risk of triggering a learner’s distress around suicide. The training also includes safety features throughout, such as quick access to crisis resources if the learner is feeling emotionally distressed. The safety of our staff and students is paramount, and LivingWorks Start reflects this. Numerous studies on LivingWorks programs have found no safety issues as a result of training.



“An excellent, approachable training for bringing suicide prevention skills to school communities. This will make a big impact.”—LivingWorks Start trainee