Iowa’s Area Education Agencies (AEAs) are providing support to Iowa schools to meet the requirements of Senate File 2113. This legislation requires school districts to provide annual employee training and protocols in two areas:

1. Suicide Prevention and Postvention
2. Identification of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response

Iowa’s AEAs also offer Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training that focuses on how to help students experiencing a mental health, addiction challenge, or crisis. YMHFA is a nationally recognized curriculum.

Additional trainings are listed in the technical assistance guidance created by the Iowa Department of Education (https://educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/GuidanceSF2113.pdf). The list is not exhaustive and school districts are not required to select from the list. School districts have the authority to select the evidence-supported training that best meets the needs of their district.

### Suicide Prevention and Postvention Training

An online course for district personnel supporting students, and knowing when and how to make referrals to school or community-based mental health providers.

- One hour
- Required annually
- AEA Learning Online, https://training.aeelearningonline.org

### Identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and Strategies to Mitigate Toxic Stress Response

This training focuses on learning the risk and protective factors, outcomes associated with ACEs, and evidence-based strategies to reduce or eliminate the impact of ACEs and stop them from occurring in the first place.

- One hour
- Required annually
- Contact your AEA for training information

Within the AEA Learning Online suicide modules, districts have the opportunity to personalize the content and add their own resources. Contact AEA Learning Online for information.

### Youth Mental Health First Aid

YMHFA is a course that focuses on how to help students experiencing a mental health, addiction challenge, or crisis. It is a quality, evidence-based training, but participation is not required of Iowa schools. YMHFA meets the suicide prevention training part of the legislation when it is completed along with the postvention module available on AEA Learning Online.

- Face-to-Face
- 6-8 hours
- Contact your AEA for training information
- AEA Learning Online Postvention Module, https://training.aeelearningonline.org
A Friend Asks App

There is a "Silent Epidemic" sweeping through our nation. It knows no social, racial or economic barriers. This "Silent Epidemic" is youth suicide! Suicide claims an average of more than 100 young lives each week in our nation.

Would you know how to help a friend who is contemplating suicide?

A FRIEND especially an INFORMED FRIEND, can help make a difference to someone who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

A FRIEND ASKS is a free smart-phone app to help provide the information, tools, and resources to help a friend (or yourself) who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

WARNING SIGNS, HOW TO HELP A FRIEND, and other useful resources are provided. The GET HELP NOW button allows for instant connectivity to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. All of these features are available on this free downloadable app.

If you are in an immediate crisis, call 911. Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (anytime 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255) or use the GET HELP NOW button on the app if you, or a friend, need to talk with a counselor for help or resources available in your area.

Suicide is not only a leading cause of death for our youth, it is a leading cause of PREVENTABLE death!

For middle and high school age youth (ages 12-18), suicide is the SECOND leading cause of death. (2016 CDC WISARDS)

For college age youth (ages 18-22), suicide is the SECOND leading cause of death. (2016 CDC WISARDS)

Over-all, suicide is the SECOND leading cause of death for our youth ages 10-24. (2016 CDC WISARDS)

Nationally, over ONE out of SIX young people "seriously considered suicide" in the past TWELVE months. (2010 CDC YRBS)

FOUR out of FIVE young people who will attempt suicide will give clear WARNING SIGNS.

Youth Suicide has been declared a NATIONAL HEALTH ISSUE by the U.S. Surgeon General's office.

Download A FRIEND ASKS app and keep on your smart-phone as a ready resource. Search "Jason Foundation" for the free app on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

The Jason Foundation
www.jasonfoundation.com
Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators

If you or someone you know is suicidal, get help immediately via 911, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK or the Crisis Text Line (text “HOME” to 741741).

Suicide is preventable. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs. Do not be afraid to ask about suicidal thoughts. Never take warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret.

**Risk Factors**
- Hopelessness
- Non-suicidal self injury (e.g., cutting)
- Mental illness, especially severe depression, but also post traumatic stress, ADHD, and substance abuse
- History of suicidal thinking and behavior
- Prior suicide among peers or family members
- Interpersonal conflict, family stress/dysfunction
- Presence of a firearm in the home

**Warning Signs**
- Suicidal threats in the form of direct (e.g., “I want to die”) and indirect (e.g. “I wish I could go to sleep and not wake up”) statements
- Suicide notes, plans, online postings
- Making final arrangements
- Preoccupation with death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Talking about death
- Sudden unexplained happiness
- Increased risk taking
- Heavy drug/alcohol use

**What to Do**
- Remain calm, nonjudgmental and listen.
- Ask directly about suicide (e.g., “Are you thinking about suicide?”).
- Focus on your concern for their well-being.
- Avoid being accusatory (e.g., don’t say, “You aren’t going to do anything stupid are you?”).
- Reassure them that there is help; they will not feel like this forever.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm, especially firearms.
- **Get help!** Never agree to keep suicidal thoughts a secret. Tell an appropriate caregiving adult. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to a school-employed mental health professional.

**Reminders for Parents**
After a school notifies a parent of their child’s risk for suicide and provides referral information, parents must:

- **Continue to take threats seriously.** Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent “they didn’t mean it.”
- **Access school supports.** If parents are uncomfortable with following through on referrals, they can give the school psychologist permission to contact the referral agency, provide referral information, and follow up on the visit.
- **Maintain communication with school.** After an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place possible for your child.

For additional guidance, visit www.nasponline.org/suicideprevention. © 2019 National Association of School Psychologists www.nasponline.org