

## Suicide Prevention Training 101

### Part 5 Transcript

**[Jason Murrey]:** So the National Institute on Mental Health suggests the five following items for preventing suicide. Asking the question, keeping the student or coworkers safe, or family members safe. Be there, be present. What happens if, in transition to somewhere, and I got somewhere I got to be immediately? Well, this is where we have that conversation with our administrators, all right? What are our rules? What do we need to do? Who do I contact if I need somebody to sub in for me, to step in for where I need to be for 10 minutes so that I can help the student that's in need? Or who do I contact to provide a warm handoff for the student who's in distress? I need to know that procedure. I need to know that information.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Every school, by state law, has to have a suicide prevention policy and a crisis plan. Hopefully, you all have seen it, and you've all had the conversation. If you haven't, you need to ask 'cause you need to know what your left and right lateral limits are in working with the student, right, That is in distress. Help them connect with help and services. Having that conversation. Those services can be 988. That is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. We have six call centers in the State of Indiana. I'm told it takes less than 30 seconds for someone to pick up and assist you. But we also have the Crisis Text Line, which also works really well as well. And students, they're texting more than they're talking.

**[Jason Murrey]:** I know my 17-year-old has great social anxiety when he has to leave a voicemail message or talk to a human, but he'll text somebody he hasn't even met that he knows. Hey, this is a coach that's recruiting me, like, "Yo, what's up?" What? Nothing like, "Hey coach, how are you doing?" Something of that nature, no. Just, "Yo, what's up?" Here we go. Like, he's fine, he's very comfortable texting. But when it's a conversation, it's difficult. Kids are having a hard time. And it's not just kids. You'll see that with adults as well, right?

**[Jason Murrey]:** Why don't individuals seek help? Why don't they seek services? Why do they not ask for help? Why wouldn't a school nurse ask for help? Or why wouldn't a teacher ask for help? Kind of goes back to that stigma, right? That if I'm asking for help, you might assume that I'm not good at my job, or I can't do the work that I do. That is why it is so critical that we follow up with individuals that we're helping. We ask them, right? I talk about counseling. Hey, it's struggling. Have you talked about talking to a counselor? And that response is "Yeah, I tried counseling. Counseling sucks." Okay. Hey, that's fair. But you all graduated from various programs, various degree programs. You know folks that you graduated with that aren't in the profession anymore. I know individuals who graduated with my masters, they could tell you all the counseling theories. They could talk to you about Freud and Erikson, and what they

brought to psychology, and what they brought to counseling, and those modalities. But when I sat down, and you do the one-on-one, and you're doing the practicum, they couldn't connect on the human level to save their lives. But they're great at research. So when somebody tells me that counseling sucks, I just let them know, no, you found a counselor that doesn't work for you. You're too important to give up on yourself. Find another one, right? Find another one.

**[Jason Murrey]:** And if it's that person, okay, five o'clock's my appointment. It's tonight. Is tomorrow an appropriate time that when you see them again to ask them, "Hey, how'd that go?" Well, if you talked them into it, "Yeah, absolutely." But every conversation we have with somebody, should we be bringing up like the mental health crisis they're going through and how you helped them? No, right? Shouldn't be doing that. But we shouldn't treat them any differently than we had before 'cause that's the biggest fear. That's what perpetuates that stigma is that I'm gonna be treated differently.

**[Jason Murrey]:** So how do we ask that question? Engage with the individual in distress. Acknowledge their pain. "You are in a pretty tough place. I'd love to hear how you came to this place, or I'd love to hear how you got there". That's how I like to start it out 'cause ultimately, that breaks down that barrier, and individuals start talking. Maybe you may say something like, "Yeah, that can certainly be hard. I know that sometimes this woman feels like you are feeling. They might be thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?" Again, "it certainly must feel overwhelming. Sometimes, when someone feels overwhelmed, they think about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?" I love to ask the question this way because that says, I see you. You're not alone in those feelings. Other people have felt that way. And when they have, they've thought about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide? So even if they're to be like, "Shut up, Jason, I wanna talk to you." I still acknowledge their existence. And so much of individuals, whether adolescents, adults, or seniors, have this feeling of being a burden to others, that they're gonna harm somebody else. And that's why they're thinking of taking their own life or that they don't even exist. Some students and their plan is to just go into the school building, and then go into each classroom and see if somebody even acknowledges their existence. And you would think, oh no, we acknowledge every kid's existence. No, we don't.

**[Jason Murrey]:** What are some of the things we can do? We can be out in the hallway in passing periods. We can be outside the door, we can make eye contact, and let them know, "Hey, I'm glad you're here today. I'm glad you're here today. Look like you don't wanna be here today, but I'm glad you are," all right? "I got something to teach you today, and you got something that I'm gonna learn from you today". And having that mix and that conversation to show the individual, they're not just a seat in the chair. You're not just a body in the office, right? That you notice that you're a person, and you're humanizing, that atmosphere. It's a lot easier, I think, to ask that question this way than to say, "Hey, are you thinking about suicide?" Both questions

are very important, but a lot of people have a hard time just asking the question, are you thinking about suicide?

**[Jason Murrey]:** So we get that yes response beyond the, oh my gosh 'cause it happens. Doesn't matter, I've been doing suicide prevention work for almost two decades. It's a hard conversation. Doesn't matter who I ask, when I say it. When I ask them, are you thinking about suicide? They say, yes, I've got all those resources. I've rattled off like, what, three in the last 35 minutes? Trust me, when they say yes, it all evaporates in my brain for at least 60 seconds. There is this oh, oh shoot, feeling, right? You get it. It's going to happen. Doesn't matter how comfortable you are in having that conversation or question. All you know, you see that person in distress, they say that, you might lose it. Doesn't mean you're losing your mind. It'll come back to you, I promise.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Ask them the question, "do you have a plan?" If they say yes, what should you ask them? "What's the plan?" In all my life, when I ask the question, they say yes. And I ask them, do you have a plan? I'll either get the negative no or I'll get the affirmative yes. And when I ask them, well, what is the plan? I have never had anybody say, "it's a secret, I'm not telling you". Because if you got them at this point, they've already broke down. That high anxiety level, it's not up here anymore. It might still be here, but it's not up here. And you're bringing in some of that level of trust, and they're able to have that conversation to help deescalate. But they may have that plan. They tell you what that plan is.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Well, what happens if it has access to lethal means? "How are you gonna do it?" "Well, I drive to school, I was gonna find a tree. I was gonna drive really fast." "Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. How'd you get here? What's going on? Sounds like your mother's really important to you. Have you talked to your mom about what you're thinking about? You haven't? Would you like to call mom? You think mom would be able to come up and pick you up from school? Is there a friend you can come by that can take you home and somebody else can come and get your car today?"

**[Jason Murrey]:** Not every crisis resorts in the need, I need to go to the stress center, or I need to go to the ED. There's a chance you may deescalate all the way down. And in that encounter, you're keeping them safe for now. You're not guaranteeing that they're not gonna have this feelings three months from now, a week from now, or tomorrow. And getting that help, that deescalation right now in that moment.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Do they have a date and time or certainty when they're planned? We're starting to see this die on date, DOD, going around abbreviations among students, right? I think that'd be a good resource. Get some of the texting codes and that kind of thing when it comes around suicide prevention to get that out to schools. Something I'll work on. Obviously, if it's immediate time of date, and they've thought about it, we're at a pretty serious level, where just deescalation isn't probably where we

should stop. We should be notifying parents, right? We should be having the conversation. We should be looking at stress centers, right? Getting students taken care of or giving that information to parents and allowing them to do that.

**[Jason Murrey]:** So no, you're not a mental health professional, and you don't have to be. The most effective practice to reduce suicidal thought is to just listen to that person in distress. No judgment, just listen, what's going on? It's okay to reach out for assistance when working with the student that's experiencing suicidal thoughts or have indicated they have a plan. You don't have to know everything. I get it. It's a small training, it's a short training. You hear it once. State law says once every three years. If you don't use it, you lose it, right? If you don't use it, you lose it. You're not expected to be the subject matter expert. You're just expected to hopefully be able to ask for the help when you feel like, yeah, this is outside of my range of abilities. I need to get help.

**[Jason Murrey]:** It is recommended that you follow your school state-mandated suicide prevention policy. Again, if you haven't seen your school's, you need to take a look at it. Have administration break it down among one of your staff meetings. You need to know what your left and right lateral limits are when it comes to a student in distress.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Negative? Hey, you would continue to listen no differently than if the individual responded with a yes. Listening reduces the level of crisis that the person is feeling. How do you provide support? "So I'm glad you're not thinking about suicide, but man, you're going through a lot. Hey, let you know my door's open. You know, let's talk about it. What's struggling? Okay. Ah, so you had a date that didn't go very well. Do you think you'll have any future dates? Do you think it's a possibility that you might like somebody else in the future? You do? Okay." So how much do we dwell and where we're at right now? How bad does that hurt, right? Just identifying where the individual is. And in that case, that scenario, I was just talking about that student. But identifying where that individual is and what's going on.

**[Jason Murrey]:** How do we provide the support? Some schools have peer-to-peer programs. Things like Bring Change to Mind, right? Or they have their own version of a peer program. I know Southport had something like Cardinal PEERS, where junior and seniors work with freshmen. Did training at Cathedral, their senior class mentors, freshmen.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Having information available, whether it be on your sports programs, right? We got basketball, we got football more than likely, utilizing the Crisis Text Line on that. Student handbooks, great place to have that information as well. Your website, great place to have that. Putting it out there on the parents' newsletter, identifying why this is important. This is what we're doing here. Having the conversation on back to school nights about mental health supports. There's no surprises. Mental health is something we all have, just like physical health. And we wanna make sure that we're



providing every family and every employee the opportunity to take care of their mental health 'cause we're just not really talking about it, right?

**[Jason Murrey]:** So some of those resources, right? Seize the Awkward campaign. It's pretty cool. When you get an opportunity, check out [seizetheawkward.org](http://seizetheawkward.org). It's very geared towards high school parents about or high school kids. It's all social media influencers geared towards seizing the awkward moment to ask a friend, "Hey, are you okay?" The videos are absolutely hilarious. Crisis Text Line is 741-741. You can text HOME, you can text INDIANA, you can text HI. It's all gonna be the same response. The Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now 988. You can utilize the Indiana Suicide Prevention website through DMHA. So there's a lot of great resources. SID, that stands for Suicide Is Different. It's a great resource, online resource. Please check it out. You can Google Suicide Is Different. And this is for individuals that are caretakers, for people who have suicidal ideation, right? 'Cause guess what? Some individuals, they live with it no matter what they do.

**[Jason Murrey]:** Other trainings, The Jason Foundation, right? They have approved two-hour online trainings. If you get two hours within their credit hours, submit your certificate. When you do your renewal for licensure, that would be your PGP. QBR training, I go out and provide in-person suicide prevention training and organizations like LivingWorks, They have things like assist training and safe talk.

**[Jason Murrey]:** All right, so a challenge for you is I'd like you to approach five people who look alone and start a conversation with them. They seem like pretty easy challenges here within the school. Plenty of students kinda look alone, especially during lunchtime, all right? They may just be on their phone. I want you to start a conversation with them. Or maybe it's a coworker. Reach out to three people you know who have struggled but you haven't kept in touch with. It can be a family member. It could be somebody that you know. Maybe a student. Be vulnerable with your own issues to two other people who don't know those issues. Hmm, we're a surface-level society. But it's not the surface that keeps us going. It's what's below it. It's what we're putting into our tank. It's what we're putting into our own minds, whether that's positive or negative. What are the things that you struggle with?

**[Jason Murrey]:** Sometimes, we struggle because of the struggle that we're dealing with, we don't have an experience in our past that has taught us how to overcome that. But chances are somebody next to you does, and they can help. But if we're not vulnerable, or we don't create a culture within our system, within our schools where vulnerability is encouraged, well, how are we gonna learn from one another? What are we promoting to our students? What are we promoting to our staff if we don't encourage vulnerability? Are we promoting a society that says, hey, speak up, take care of one another? Are we promoting a society that says nobody cares about your problems? Fall in line, get up, and complete the day. If you can't be here tomorrow, we'll find somebody who will, which is funny when I hear that come through some



administrators because last time, I checked, there are like 1,900 job postings in the state when it comes to education. I got administrators having a hard time even filling just the basic positions within our schools.