

# Understanding Depression & Preventing Suicide

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**IOWA HEALTH**  
DES MOINES

Methodist • Lutheran • Blank



*Employee  
Assistance*

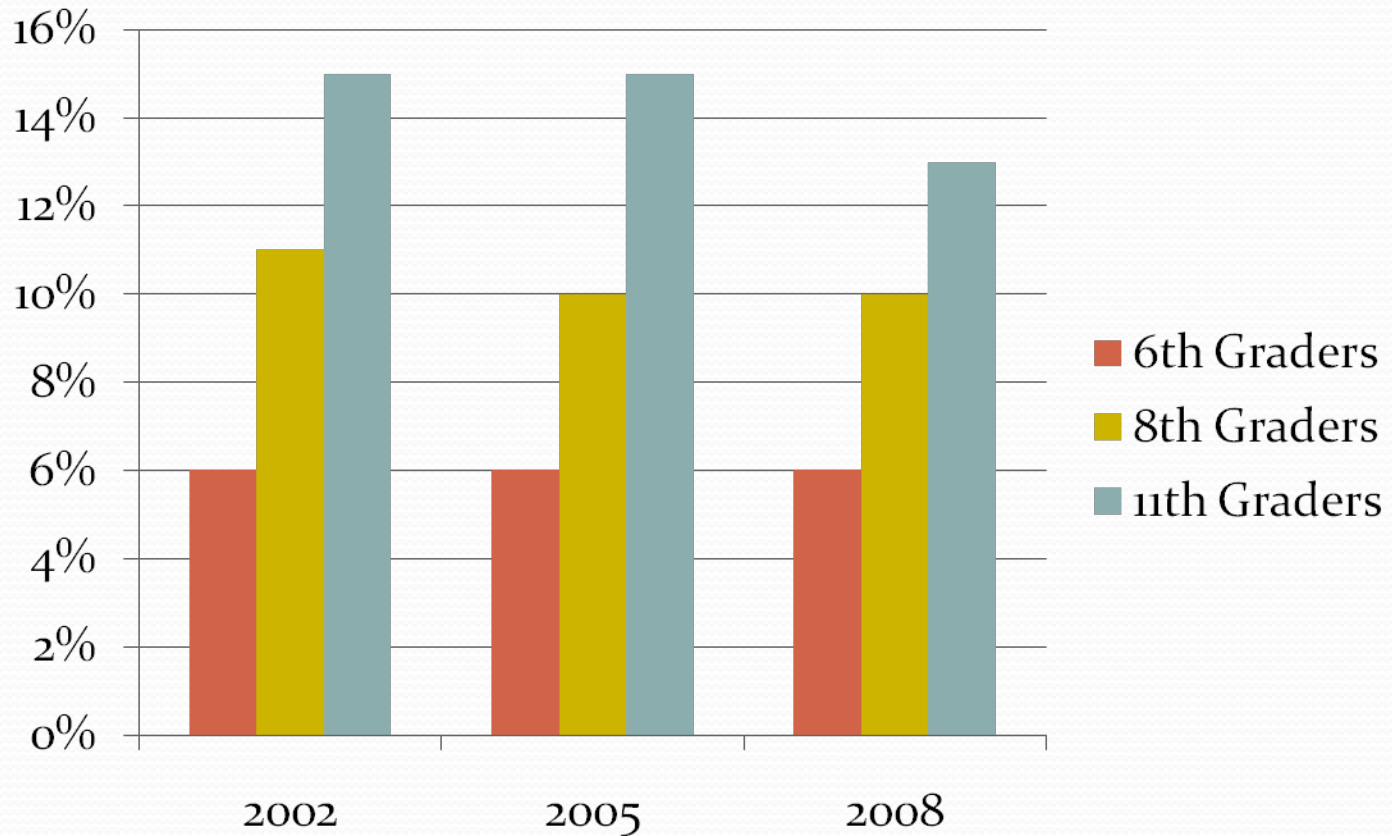
**PROGRAM**

# Youth Suicide

- Average of 332 Iowans die of suicide each year - 2009= 356
- IYS – 2008 – 10% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade respondents reported attempting 1x or more = 3,780 kids.
- 2nd leading cause of death among 15 – 19 year olds in Iowa
- Teenage girls 3x more likely to attempt.
- Teenage boys 2x more likely to complete.

# 2008 Iowa Youth Survey - State

## One or more suicide attempts



# Warning Signs...

- Suicide can be prevented – there are often warning signs or **RED FLAGS**.
  - Depression – Mood – Loss of Interest – SIGECAPS.
  - Isolation
  - Increased alcohol – drug use
  - Increased risk taking – impulsiveness
  - Lack of future orientation
  - Rage – anger
  - Sudden change in disposition – attitude – mood
  - Overt Threats of Suicide – Plans - Methods



# Suicide Ideation - What to do...

- Be Aware – Behavioral Disorders, e.g. depression – consult a professional.
- Past Attempts – already crossed the line (50% more likely to attempt – descends over time – NIMH).
- Take it Seriously 50 – 75% of completers gave some warning sign to friends/family (AFSP).
- Be willing and able to Listen – “stability” vs. “change” response.



# What to do – right now...

- If you are with someone you believe is at risk of imminent harm:
  - Do not leave the person **and** summon help.
  - Remove lethal means from the environment (weapons, pills, etc.)
  - Ask the question – “Are you thinking about killing yourself?” Patiently - wait and listen for the response.
  - Get the person to a Behavioral Access facility, ER or call 911.

# Resources – 911 & beyond...

- Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- National Institute for Mental Health  
[www.nimh.gov](http://www.nimh.gov)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)
- National Center for Health Statistics  
[www.cdc.gov/nchs/](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/)
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration – [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

# Local Resources...

- Johnston Schools Guidance & Student Service Professionals – see handout.
  
- Iowa Health Des Moines – Employee & Student Assistance Programs – 263-4004

