



## Protocols and training for suicide prevention and postvention, adverse childhood experiences identification and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response

### Introduction

On March 29, 2018, Governor Kim Reynolds signed legislation requiring school employee training and protocols relating to suicide prevention and postvention, identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response.

### Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to aid Iowa's public school districts in interpreting and implementing Iowa Code § 279.70 regarding adopting protocols and training on suicide prevention and postvention, adverse childhood experiences identification, and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response. The requirements of Iowa Code § 279.70 and IAC 281—14.4 apply to all public school districts in Iowa.

### Legal Definitions

Iowa Code §279.70 – Training on suicide prevention, adverse childhood experiences identification, and toxic stress response mitigation strategies.

Iowa Administrative Code 281—14.4(279) – Suicide prevention, identification of adverse childhood experiences, and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response.

### Definitions 14.4 (1)

“Adverse childhood experience” means a potentially traumatic event occurring in childhood that can have negative, lasting effects on an individual’s health and well-being.

“Postvention” means the provision of crisis intervention, support, and assistance for those affected by a suicide or suicide attempt to prevent further risk of suicide.

### School District Requirements

By July 1, 2019, Iowa school districts are required to adopt protocols and require training for all school personnel who hold a license, certificate, authorization, or statement of recognition issued by the board of educational examiners and who have regular contact with students in kindergarten through grade twelve.

The training shall occur annually and the content of the training shall be based on nationally recognized best practices. The legislation states that the trainings are to be required by July 1, 2019. The trainings must be provided annually between July 1 and June 30.

Suicide prevention and postvention training – evidence-based, evidence-supported, **at least one hour in length**

Identification of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response – evidence-based, evidence-supported

The ACES identification and mitigation of toxic stress training does not have a required length of time and must be in addition to the required minimum 60 minutes. It is recommended that the ACES identification and mitigation of toxic stress training be at least 60 minutes.

The specific requirements and recommendation are listed in table below, along with the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Rule citation. Further information in this document include the Technical assistance Appendices and resource list. Links to specific supports in the technical assistance appendices are referred to in this document.

The table below list actions that are required by per §279.70 and IAC281-14.4

**Table 1 Code Citation, District Action Required and Deadline**

Item	Iowa Code Citation	Iowa Administrative Code Citation	Action Required of school district	Deadline
1	Iowa Code chapter 279 and 2018 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2113  Sections 135.185, 280.16, 256.77(33), and 279.70	IAC 281-14.4 (2)	<p>(State Board to adopt rules) Adopt protocols for suicide prevention and postvention and the identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response.</p> <p><i>Required protocols.</i> School districts shall adopt protocols for suicide prevention and postvention and the identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response. The protocols shall be based on nationally recognized best practices.</p> <p>Technical Assistance on best practices for suicide prevention and postvention protocols is included in <a href="#">Appendix A1</a>.</p> <p>Technical Assistance on best practices for protocols on the identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response is included in <a href="#">Appendix B1</a></p>	

Item	Iowa Code Citation	Iowa Administrative Code Citation	Action Required of school district	Deadline
2	279.70	IAC 281-14.4 (3)  (a)	<p><i>Require training</i></p> <p>The board of directors of a school district shall require annual, evidence-based training <u>at least one hour</u> in length on suicide prevention and postvention for all school personnel who hold a license, certificate, authorization, or statement of recognition issued by the board of educational examiners and who have regular contact with students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The content of the training shall be based on nationally recognized best practices.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding suicide prevention and postvention training is included in <a href="#">Appendix A 2</a>.</p>	<p>By July 1, 2019</p> <p>The school district's board must require annual training by July 1, 2019. Trainings do not have to occur until after July 1, 2019. Training must be provided annually.</p>
3	279.70	IAC 281-14.4 (3)  (b)	<p><i>Require Training</i></p> <p>The board of directors of a school district shall require annual, evidence-based, evidence-supported training on the identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response for all school personnel who hold a license, certificate, authorization, or statement of recognition issued by the board of educational examiners and who have regular contact with students in kindergarten through grade twelve. The content of the training shall be based on nationally recognized best practices.</p> <p>Technical Assistance regarding training on the identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response is included in <a href="#">Appendix B 2</a>.</p>	<p>By July 1, 2019</p> <p>The school district's board must require annual trainings by July 1, 2019. Trainings do not have to occur until after July 1, 2019. Trainings must be provided annually.</p>

## Purpose

The purpose of these documents is to aid Iowa's public school districts in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code § 279.70 and IAC 281—14.4 regarding protocols and training for suicide prevention and postvention, identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response. For specific requirements and permitted actions, please refer to published suicide prevention and postvention, identification of adverse childhood experiences and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response guidance. Each appendix contains:

1. Best Practice for Protocols
2. Evidence-supported, Evidence-based training recommendations
3. Additional Resources

APPENDIX	TOPIC
A 1	Protocols for Suicide Prevention and Postvention
A 2	Training in Suicide Prevention and Postvention
A 3	Additional Resources
B 1	Protocols for Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mitigating Toxic Stress
B 2	Trainings in Adverse Childhood Experiences and Strategies to Mitigate Toxic Stress Response
B 3	Additional Resources

# A 1 Protocols for Suicide Prevention and Postvention

The following appendix is to be used as a companion technical assistance to the Iowa Department of Education's official guidance for Iowa Code section 279.70. The purpose of this appendix is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code section 279.70. The content is focused on nationally recognized standards of best practice.

*Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools* identifies two essential components that every school should have in place 1. Protocols for helping students at possible risk of suicide and 2. Protocols for responding to a suicide death. Prior to providing suicide prevention training, it is essential that protocols and procedures for suicide prevention and postvention be in place and that the protocols be known by school staff. Identifying students who are at risk of suicide will be more likely to prevent suicide when the referral procedures and appropriate supports are in place. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, p.17). Everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide, and it is important for everyone to understand their role.

The following resources provide nationally recognized best practice guidance for developing policies and protocols for suicide prevention and postvention, and sample model policy.

[Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#) Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools was funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to help high schools, school districts, and their partners design and implement strategies to prevent suicide and promote behavioral health among their students. It represents the best available evidence and expert opinion on preventing suicide of high school students. The information and tools in this toolkit will help schools and their partners:

- Assess their ability to prevent suicide among students and respond to suicides that may occur
- Understand strategies that can help students who are at risk for suicide
- Understand how to respond to the suicide of a student or other member of the school community
- Identify suicide prevention programs and activities that are effective for individual schools and respond to the needs and cultures of each school's students
- Integrate suicide prevention into activities that fulfill other aspects of the school's mission, such as preventing the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

This publication may be downloaded at no cost or ordered at: <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Preventing-Suicide-A-Toolkit-for-High-Schools/SMA12-4669>

[After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools Second Edition](#), the national guidance for postvention, was written by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) and the Education Development Center (EDC) in 2018. This guidance is endorsed by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and American School Counselor Association (ASCA). It can be downloaded for free. After a Suicide Toolkit for Schools Second Edition includes guidance on: Crisis Response, Helping Students Cope, Working with the Community, Working with the Media, Memorialization, Social Media, Suicide Contagion, Bringing in Outside Help; as well providing templates and tools for communication and planning. This publication can be downloaded at no cost or ordered at: <http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/resource-program/AfteraSuicideToolkitforSchools.pdf>

## Model Policy on Suicide Prevention

[https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy\\_FINAL.pdf](https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Model-Policy_FINAL.pdf) The Model Policy on Suicide Prevention was developed by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), the Trevor Project, the National Association of School Psychologist (NASP), and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). This document outlines model policies and best practices for school districts to follow to protect the health and safety of all students.

## A 2 Training in Suicide Prevention and Postvention

The following appendix is to be used as companion technical assistance to the Iowa Department of Education's official guidance for Iowa Code section 279.70. The purpose is to support schools in implementing the requirements of Iowa Code § 279.70 and IAC 281—14.4. The content is focused on nationally recognized best practice for suicide prevention and postvention trainings.

### Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings

Suicide prevention trainings designed to teach people to identify individuals who are showing warning signs of suicide risk and help these individuals get the services they need, are called "Gatekeeper" trainings. The idea is to train adult "gatekeepers" to recognize and help an individual in accessing appropriate supports. Research tells us that to be most effective, Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper trainings should be a part of a school and community's comprehensive suicide prevention plan. According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center ([www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)), a comprehensive approach should include these key components:

- Promote emotional well-being and connectedness among all students.
- Identify students who may be at risk for suicide and assist them in getting help
- Be prepared to respond when a suicide death occurs

### Postvention Trainings

Be prepared to respond when a suicide death occurs. Iowa code 281-14.4 (1) defines postvention as, "the provision of crisis intervention, support, and assistance for those affected by a suicide or suicide attempt to prevent further risk of suicide." The Suicide Prevention Resource Center website states that all settings should incorporate postvention as part of a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. After a Suicide: A Toolkit for Schools, Second Edition, provides detailed guidance for postvention, including templates and tools for communication and planning. Part of postvention training for school staff should include a review of the school's suicide protocols. While the level of involvement may vary for different staff, it is important that everyone know their role in suicide prevention.

### Training Selection and Implementation

1. Suicide prevention policies and protocols should be in place before suicide prevention trainings are implemented. Before training school staff to recognize suicide risks, it is essential that procedures and appropriate supports are in place.
2. In selecting trainings, look for programs that have evidence related to the desired outcomes and priority populations in your strategic plan. Youth.gov, an interagency working group of 21 federal agencies, provides the following guidance on [selecting evidence-based programs](#).
3. The Suicide Prevention Resource Center provides the following considerations in selecting trainings:
  - a. The criteria used to designate programs as "evidence-based" vary across registries and reviews.
  - b. No registry or review includes a complete listing of all possible programs, so consult multiple sources.
  - c. Start with a needs assessment. Program registries and lists are useful tools, but thoughtful data-driven, strategic planning are most important in selecting trainings that best fit the needs of your school.
  - d. Look for programs that address the underlying risk and protective factors and the conditions that drive or contribute to suicide in your community or school.
  - e. Choose programs that match your population, setting, and culture and that are feasible in terms of capacity, resources, and readiness.

4. A list of evidence-based, evidence-supported suicide prevention and postvention trainings are listed in this document. The list is **not** exhaustive, however, and schools are not required to select from this list. Schools have the authority and responsibility to select evidence-supported, evidence-based trainings that best meet the needs of their school district.
5. The suicide prevention and postvention training is required to be a minimum of one hour. Available trainings vary widely in training length, formats, delivery (in-person, on-line), and cost. Some of the trainings listed in this document are available at no cost, and the cost varies for others.
6. A minimum of one hour of training in suicide prevention and postvention is required for all school personnel who hold a license, certificate, authorization or statement of recognition by the Board of Educational Examiners and who regularly interact with students in kindergarten - 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Requirements for the training must be in place by July 1, 2019. Trainings must be provided annually after July 1, 2019, starting in the 2019-2020 school year.
7. All Gatekeeper trainings provide suicide prevention information, but may not include required postvention content. Additional training on postvention is necessary if it is not included in the selected training.
8. The Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM) provides guidance and technical assistance for Iowa districts to use when designing and supporting their district and building professional development plans. For additional information visit: [Iowa Professional Development Model](#)

## Suicide Prevention/Postvention Trainings

A list of evidence-based, evidence supported Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper trainings is included in this guidance. Most of the trainings listed in this document were selected from the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) Resources and Programs, formerly Best Practices Registry. The criteria for trainings to be included in this document are: 1.The training audience specifically included school personnel, and, 2.The training was available in Iowa or had a Training of Trainers option that allowed for training to be provided in Iowa. You may review the complete list of the suicide prevention trainings listed on the [SPRC website](#).

**It is important to note that the list of trainings included in this document are not exhaustive.** It is the intention that this list be helpful for schools in considering a menu of possible trainings. Some of the trainings identified in this document are available at no cost; while other trainings vary in cost. Local school districts are responsible and have authority for selecting the evidence-based, evidence-supported suicide prevention and postvention training that best fits the needs of their school district.

### [Applied Suicide Intervening Skills Training \(ASIST\)](#)

#### Training Objectives

- Understand the ways personal and societal attitudes affect views on suicide and interventions
- Provide guidance and suicide first-aid to a person at risk in ways that meet their individual safety needs
- Identify the key elements of an effective suicide safety plan and the actions required to implement it.
- Appreciate the value of improving and integrating suicide prevention resources in the community at large
- Recognize other important aspects of suicide prevention, including life-promotion and self-care

### [Be a Link! Community Gatekeeper Training](#)

#### Training Objectives

- Identify the warning signs and risk and protective factors of suicide
- Know resources to help people at risk and how to access them
- Talk with teens about suicide and suicide prevention
- Talk with a young person at risk for suicide or seeking help
- Understand school liabilities, policies and procedures

## **Connect/Suicide Prevention/Intervention Training**

### Connect Postvention Training

#### Training Objectives

- Recognize the warning signs of mental illness, substance abuse and other risk factors that lead to suicide
- Intervene and connect a person at risk for suicide to resources
- Understand the topics related to suicide and suicide prevention, including attitudes toward suicide and the effects of stigma, national suicide date, and individual and community risk and protective factors, reducing access to lethal means, safe messaging and the influence of electronic media

## **Kognito Suicide Prevention Simulations – Educators (Elementary, Middle, High School, and University/College)**

### Middle school educator prevention training

### High School educator prevention training

#### Training Objectives

- Identify the common signs of psychological distress
- Talk with students about their issues, building resilience, and increasing connectedness
- Determine students' need for referral, motivate them to seek help, and assist them in getting help
- Collaborate with parents to discuss concerns and how to access help (for elementary educators)

## **Lifelines: A Comprehensive Suicide Awareness and Responsiveness Program for Teens**

#### Training Objectives

- Understand the facts about suicide and their roles in suicide prevention
- Understand how to involve parents and guardians as partners
- Gather information about a student's risk for suicide and understand the warning signs of suicide
- Talk with at-risk students and assist them in getting more help as needed

## **Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention: ACT on FACTS**

#### Training Objectives

- Define suicide prevention as a part of the school culture by contextualizing it as a component of a school community"
- Describe the critical but limited role of educators in the prevention process
- Explain why specific categories of students may be at increased risk

## **More Than Sad**

### American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

### AFSP Iowa Chapter

#### Training Objectives

- Understand their school's resources, policies and protocols for identifying and assisting youth at risk of suicide
- Increase understanding of the problem of youth suicide, risk factors, and treatment and prevention of suicidal behavior in adolescents



- Identify the signs of depression and other mental health problems in youth
- Access help and/or refer youth for help

### **Plan, Prepare, Prevent: The SOS Signs of Suicide On-line Gatekeeper Training**

#### Training Objectives

- Discuss the prevalence of youth depression and suicidal behavior
- Describe risk and protective factors for depression and suicidal behavior
- Recognize and respond to suicide warning signs
- Understand the steps involved in rolling out an evidence-based school suicide prevention program

### **Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)**

#### Training Objectives

- Recognize the warning signs of suicide
- How to talk with someone who may be at risk for suicide and persuade them to get help
- Refer at-risk individuals to appropriate resources for help

### **Response (Second Edition)**

#### Training Objectives

- Recognize the signs of depression and suicide
- Understand the attitudes and behaviors that can hinder help-seeking
- Understand the steps for seeking help for oneself and others
- Identify and use “crisis contacts” at the school who can offer immediate help

### **Suicide Prevention: A Gatekeeper Training for School Personnel**

#### Training Objectives

- Know the suicide warning signs and risk and protective factors
- Know the suicide warning signs
- Ask students directly about suicide
- Locate school and/or community resources for at-risk students and their families

## **Additional Trainings Not Listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center Website**

The trainings included in this section are not listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center’s (SPRC) website, but the content of the trainings is evidence supported and based on the most current research available in suicide prevention.

### **Area Education Agency (AEA) Learning Online Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Training**

The Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention training was developed by an AEA Suicide Prevention work group in partnership with AEA Learning Online, to support school districts in meeting the suicide prevention and postvention required training. This training is offered at no cost to districts. School staff may use their AEA login to access the training. Individuals may register in the AEA online system if they do not have an existing account.

For information and assistance with customizing the module for your district or questions about system functionality, contact Rob Brookhart at [rbrookhart@aealearningonline.org](mailto:rbrookhart@aealearningonline.org) or (515) 270-9030. For information about module content, please contact David VanHorn at [dvanhorn@ghaea.org](mailto:dvanhorn@ghaea.org).

Training Objectives

- Increase awareness of the problem of youth suicide
- Know the suicide warning signs, and risk and protective factors
- Understand the role of a “Gatekeeper”
- Locate school and/or community resources for at-risk students and their families
- Understand the role of postvention
- Know school district suicide prevention and postvention policy and/or contact person

**AEA Learning On-line Postvention training**

This postvention on-line training module was developed to support school district in meeting the suicide **postvention** training content requirement. This on-line training can be used **in addition to** Youth Mental Health First Aid or other suicide prevention Gatekeeper trainings which may not include the required postvention content to meet the full suicide prevention and postvention training requirement. The on-line postvention training is offered at no cost to Iowa school districts and AEA staff.

**Please Pass the Love Suicide Prevention Training**

Training objectives:

- Recognize warning signs of mental illness and suicide prevention and how that may look in a school setting
- Identify and appropriately respond to suicide warning signs
- Understand the role of a "Gatekeeper" towards getting the young person help

**Youth Mental Health First Aid**

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is an evidence-based training. The content includes suicide prevention, and also addresses other types of crisis and non-crisis situations. YMHFA teaches a 5 step process in responding to a youth who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or psychological distress. Certified YMHFA Instructors are available at each Area Education Agency.

Training objectives:

- Increase awareness of mental health and the importance of stigma reduction
- Learn risk and protective factors and warning signs
- Learn 5 step process to respond appropriately to a young person who may be struggling with a mental health challenge
- Know state and local resources for at-risk students and their families

Table 1 provides an overview of possible trainings and the details of each training, including which trainings provide the required suicide prevention and postvention content.

**Table 1. Training, Prevention, Postvention, Length, Cost, Delivery Format, TOT, Youth Component**

	Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings	Suicide Post-vention Trainings	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model	Youth Component Available
Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)*	Yes	No	2 days (15 hours)	Varies	In Person (Available in multiple languages)	Yes	No

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	Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings	Suicide Post-vention Trainings	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model	Youth Component Available
<b>Be a Link! Community Gatekeeper Training</b>	Yes	No	2.5 hours	\$299.95 for the program toolkit	Curriculum  PowerPoint, training manual, preparation worksheet  Direct training available upon request	Yes	Yes
<b>Connect Suicide Prevention/ Intervention Training</b>	Yes	Depends on length of training	1 day (6 hours) or customized	1 day: \$3,000 2 day: \$6,000 3 day: \$7,500-10,200 4 day: \$13,200	In Person	Yes	Yes
<b>Kognito Suicide Prevention Simulations*</b>	Yes	No *A separate Postvention 60 minute on-line training will be available in April 2019	60 minutes	Cost is tiered based on number of users  Strategic planning and user reports are included	Online  <a href="#">At-Risk for Elementary School Educators</a>  <a href="#">At-Risk for Middle School Educators</a>  <a href="#">At-Risk for High School Educators</a>	No	No
<b>Lifeguard Training</b>	Yes	No	2 hour	Free	In-person training & curriculum available on-line training and curriculum, In-person training available	No	No
<b>Lifelines</b>	Yes	Yes	Varies	Whole School Program with 3 Components  1. Lifelines Prevention: \$239.95 2. Lifelines Intervention: \$164.95	Curriculum  Each component includes a facilitator guide, DVDs, and a USB flash drive, materials and	No  National trainers are available to assist with impleme	Yes

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	Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings	Suicide Post-vention Trainings	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model	Youth Component Available
				3. Lifelines Postvention: \$124.95	handouts available online	ntation, but not required	
<b>Making Educators Partners in Youth Suicide Prevention: ACT on FACTS</b>	Yes	No	2 hours	Free	Online  In person trainings also available	No	No
<b>More than Sad</b>	Yes	No	Varies	\$59.99 video	Curriculum  Program includes video, curriculum, PowerPoint, and other training materials	No	Yes
<b>Plan, Prepare, Prevent: The SOS Signs of Suicide On-line Gatekeeper Training</b>	Yes	No	90 minutes	Free	The on-line SOS Gatekeeper training is part of larger SOS Program. It can be used independently.	No	Yes
<b>Please Pass the Love Suicide Prevention Training</b>	Yes	No	1 hour, additional trainings optional	\$150 plus travel	In-person	No	Yes
<b>Question. Persuade. Refer. (QPR)</b>	Yes	No	1 hour	\$29.95/person Organization group rates as low as \$9.95 are available	Online  Extended learning options available beyond basic QPR courses	No	No
<b>Response (Second Edition)</b>	Yes	No	2 hours	School kit: \$425 Additional teacher manuals: \$137.50	Curriculum  Kit includes manuals, PowerPoints, and DVDs	No	Yes
<b>Suicide Prevention: A Gatekeeper Training for School Personnel</b>	Yes	No	2 hours for gatekeeper training	\$400-\$500 (plus expenses)	In person	No	No

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	Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Trainings	Suicide Post-vention Trainings	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model	Youth Component Available
<b>AEA Learning On-line Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention</b>	Yes	Yes	1 hour	Free	On-line <a href="https://training.aealearning.org">https://training.aealearning.org</a>	No	No
<b>AEA Learning On-line Postvention training</b>	No	Yes	15 minutes	Free	On-line <a href="https://training.aealearning.org">https://training.aealearning.org</a>	No	No
<b>Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)</b>	Yes	No	1 day (6 or 8 hours)	\$18.95/person for manual; Training costs vary by trainer and facility	In person	Yes	No

## Additional Resources

### Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention

Suicide Prevention Resource Center provides a model and guidance on comprehensive suicide prevention and mental health promotion: [Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Guidance](#)

### Student Education

Student Education is a recommended component of comprehensive suicide prevention programs. Research tells us that students often talk with other students before they tell an adult (Kalafat, 2003)). The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) recommends implementing at least one type of program to engage students in suicide prevention and to integrate suicide prevention into other health courses and initiatives. Students learn the signs and symptoms of a mental health challenge, understand the importance of getting help, and know how to support another student to seek the help they need. In Iowa, health and wellness literacy requirements are addressed in Iowa Code section 279.50, Iowa Code section 256.11, and Iowa Code section 256.9. While student suicide prevention programs and education are not specifically required, resources for developing or selecting student education programs are included in this guidance. Before schools implement a student education program that addresses suicide, it is important to have in place suicide prevention/postvention protocols and training for school staff. Additional information and a matrix of student programs can be found in Chapter 6 of [Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#).

Student programs can also be found on [Suicide Prevention Resource Center's Resources and Programs](#) webpage.

### Vulnerable Populations

#### [Lifeguard Training](#)

The Lifeguard workshop is a free online learning module with a video, curriculum, and teacher resources for middle school and high school classrooms. The Trevor Project's Trainings for Professionals include in-person Ally and CARE trainings designed for adults who work with youth. These trainings help counselors, educators, administrators, school nurses and social workers discuss LGBTQ –competent suicide prevention.

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## [Tribal Training and Technical Assistance \(TTA\) Center](#)

The TTA Center aims to decrease the effect of risk factors and increase protective factors to promote healthy and safe development of American Indian and Alaska Native children, youth and families. The center provides training and resources covering mental and/or substance use prevention, suicide prevention, and health promotion in native communities.

## Parent, Guardian and Family Education

Parents can help protect their children from suicide risk by: maintaining a supportive and involved relationship with their sons and daughters, understanding the warning signs and risk factors for suicide, and knowing where to turn for help (SAMHSA 2012). In the shared commitment to prevent youth suicide, it is important that schools partner with parents, guardians, and family members of students. Family involvement in schools benefits both the student and the school. It increases student achievement and attendance, enhances school climate, and fosters student emotional and social growth.

The school should partner with parents and community to increase awareness of the prevalence and risk of suicide in their community. Parents and families have a right to know why a school is engaging their children in suicide-prevention efforts, and why their involvement is so critical. School personnel can assist parents with direction and ideas to become more involved in their children's school in order to foster a positive home/school relationship. Education and partnership is the key. When families, educators, and youth team up about these issues, everyone benefits. Parent Education and Outreach components and a matrix of programs are included in the chapter 5 of [Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools](#). Additional family resources can be found on SPRC's website [here](#).

## Find Support

### **Your Life Iowa**

The Iowa Department of Public Health created <https://YourLifeIowa.org> to provide help for alcohol, drug and gambling problems, and suicidal thoughts. Support and assistance is available through Live Chat or by calling **(855) 581-8111**, or by texting **(855) 895-8398**.

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)**

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. When you call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), you are connected to the nearest crisis center in a national network of more than 150 that provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals day and night. The Lifeline also provides informational materials, such as brochures, wallet cards, posters, and booklets. Translators speaking approximately 150 languages are available at 1-888-628-9454. Ensure the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number is visible. Schools may wish to consider including the Lifeline number in easily accessible locations, such as the back of student identification badges and the student and parent handbooks.

## References

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, & Suicide Prevention Resource Center. (2018). *After a suicide: A toolkit for schools* (2nd ed.). Waltham, MA: Education Development Center.
- Kalafat, J. School Approaches to youth suicide prevention. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 20(10), 1-13.ole, S. F., Eisner, A., Gregory, M., & Ristuccia, J. (2013).
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in education. (2006). *Research Review and Resources*. September 16, 2011 retrieved from [www.ncpie.org/WhatsHappening/researchJanuary2006.cfm](http://www.ncpie.org/WhatsHappening/researchJanuary2006.cfm).
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Preventing Suicide: A Toolkit for High Schools. HHS Publication No. SMA-12-4669. Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012.

# B 1: Protocols for Identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mitigation of Toxic Stress Response

The following appendix is to be used as a companion technical assistance to the Iowa Department of Education's official guidance for Iowa Code section 279.70 in supporting school districts with adopting protocols for the identification of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and strategies to mitigate toxic stress response.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences and Toxic Stress Response

Research underscores the need to create safe and supportive learning environments, where all students have opportunities to thrive. It is important to acknowledge the effect of ACEs and exposure to traumatic experiences; it is equally important to know the positive role adults can have in mitigating toxic stress response. ACEs are a risk factor, not a determinant. Research has clearly demonstrated the significant role teachers and other school staff can have in health promotion and prevention (Sanchez, et.al 2018).

Developmental Trauma refers to multiple or chronic exposure to one or more forms of developmentally adverse interpersonal trauma. Without the presence of a consistent, caring adult to buffer toxic stress, adverse childhood experiences can become developmental trauma. (Vander Kolk 2015, Blodgett 2017) Protocols, policies and practices that focus on mitigating toxic stress response are considered trauma-sensitive or trauma-informed. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse Mental Health Service's Administration (SAMHSA) provides four key assumptions for trauma-informed approaches: (a) a realization of the widespread prevalence and impact of trauma, (b) a recognition of the signs of traumatic exposure and (c) a response grounded in evidence-based practices and (d) resists re-traumatization of individuals. It is recommended that school protocols for the identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences and the mitigation of toxic stress response share these foundational assumptions. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2014). Considerations for protocol development are listed below

## Considerations for protocol development

- 1. Increase awareness.** Provide trainings for staff that increase awareness and knowledge of the prevalence of ACEs, the impact on healthy development and student learning, and the power of adults to mitigate the toxic stress response. The [Iowa Professional Development Model](#) provides guidance and technical assistance for Iowa districts to use when designing and supporting their district and building professional development plans.
- 2. Implement universal strategies for identification and mitigation of the toxic stress response.** Because ACEs are common and highly prevalent, whole-school approaches are needed to address the magnitude of trauma affecting students. Universal strategies that build resiliency and mitigate the toxic stress response include creating safe, caring and predictable learning environments, building responsive relationships by/between children and adults, and strengthening core life skills. The identification of ACEs should focus on increased awareness and knowledge of the prevalence of ACEs and understanding of its impact.

**Universal screening for ACEs or trauma is not recommended.** Current research cautions against universal screening for trauma in school settings. A systematic review of eighteen measures available to screen children and youth for trauma exposure and/or symptom concluded there was very little psychometric evidence available to support the use of trauma screening measures in schools. (Eklund, Rossen, Koriakin, Chatouleus, 2018; Finkelhor 2017) In *Creating and Advocating for Trauma-Sensitive Schools*, Cole, Eisner, Gergerory and Ristuccia (2013, p.54) state, "this is not recommended and could be quite harmful. In addition to stigmatizing some children, this approach also reinforces the idea that



*trauma sensitivity is solely about applying interventions to particular children instead of creating a safe whole-school environment for all children.”*

3. **Use evidence-based strategies for students who need additional supports.** Consider the presence or impact of trauma exposure on a student’s academic and behavioral performance. Consider possible exposure to trauma in all individualized plans (e.g., potential trauma reminders, trauma responses, and trauma-related supports), all assessment protocols or behavior plans. Resources on recommended best practice are included in the Trauma Sensitive Training Package linked below and in the Additional Resources section in this document.
4. **Support and promote staff self and collective care.** Provide time for staff to reflect and to address secondary traumatic stress that arises from dealing with trauma affected students.
5. **Engage families** as valued and respected partners in their child’s education.
6. **Align protocols** for the identification of ACES and the mitigation of the toxic stress response with the school district’s Emergency Operations Plan. For guidance on school district emergency operations planning view [here](#).

The following resource was developed by the National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE), with support from the U.S. Department of education. NCSSLE is operated by the American Institute for Research (AIR).provides a framework for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach within a multi-tiered system of support school or district wide. This package includes a training which addresses adverse childhood experiences and mitigation of toxic stress response.

### **[The Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package](#)**

The *Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package* offers school and district administrators and staff a framework and roadmap for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach school- or districtwide. The Training Package includes a variety of resources for educating school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices and for providing school leaders with a step-by-step process for implementing a universal, trauma-informed approach using package materials. The Training Package includes four components: Implementation Guide, Understanding Trauma and Its Impact, Building Trauma Sensitive Schools and Leading Trauma Sensitive Schools. The trauma training and all materials are available on-line at no cost. Please note that this package provides a training which is also included in the table of evidence-based, evidence-supported trainings on page 17 of this guidance.

## B 2: Trainings for Identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mitigation of Toxic Stress Response

Although national best practice registries have not yet been created to evaluate the trainings themselves, the content of the trainings listed in the table below are based in the scientific research of the ACES study and neuroscience of toxic stress response. The trainings included in this document are not exhaustive. The list is provided as a resource for schools in considering a menu of possible trainings. Some of the trainings identified in this document are available at no cost; while other trainings vary in cost. Local school districts are responsible and have authority for selecting the evidence-based, evidence-supported training that best fits the needs of their school district.

Table 1 provides a list of possible trainings. It identifies which trainings provide the required content of ACES and mitigation of toxic stress response, as well as training length, delivery format, availability of train the trainer model, and contact for more information. This training list is provided as a resource. School districts are not obligated to select from this list.

**Table 1.**

***Training, Training components of ACES and Mitigation of Toxic Stress Response, Training Length, Cost, Format, TOT Model, For More Information***

Training	ACES	Mitigation of Toxic Stress Response	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model Available	For More Information:
<b>ACE Interface</b>	Yes	Yes	1 to 6 hours	Free	In- person	Yes; trainer manual cost \$90	<a href="http://www.aceinterface.com">www.aceinterface.com</a> <a href="http://www.childabuseqc.org">www.childabuseqc.org</a> <a href="mailto:paulav@childabuseqc.org">paulav@childabuseqc.org</a>
<b>TN Dept. of Education Building Strong Brains</b>	Yes	Yes	1 hour, 3 hour and 6 hour options	Free	In-person	Yes	Instructors at Great Prairie, Green Hills, Heartland, Keystone, and Northwest AEAs
<b>Connections Matter</b>	Yes	Yes	Varies	Free, some specialized trainings may cost	In-person	Yes	<a href="http://www.connectionsmatter.org">www.connectionsmatter.org</a>
<b>From Toxic Environmental Stresses to Success</b>	Yes	Yes	1 hour	Free	On-line <a href="https://training.aealearningonline.org">https://training.aealearningonline.org</a> or in-person	Yes	AEA Learning Online and Central Iowa ACES 360 <a href="http://www.iowaaces360.org">www.iowaaces360.org</a>
<b>Please Pass the Love</b>	Yes	Yes	1 hour	\$150 plus travel	In-person	No	<a href="http://www.pleasepassthelove.org">www.pleasepassthelove.org</a>
<b>We Can! Building Relationships and Resilience</b>	Yes	Yes	7-1 hour sessions delivered throughout school year, Build on current structures	Varies	In-person, additional coaching available	Yes	University of Iowa Dr. Armeda Wojciak <a href="mailto:wojciak@uiowa.edu">wojciak@uiowa.edu</a>

Training	ACES	Mitigation of Toxic Stress Response	Length	Cost	Delivery Format	Train the Trainer Model Available	For More Information:
<b>Understanding Trauma and Its Impact</b>	Yes	Yes	2 hour, This training component is one of a four part training toolkit. It can be completed independently.	Free	On-line, and e-resources that can be used for in-person training	Yes, On-line resources and facilitator guidance	National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, American Institute for Research <a href="#">Understanding Trauma and Its Impact</a>
<b>Kognito Building Trauma Informed Practices for K-12 Schools</b>	Yes	Yes	45 minutes	Cost is on tiered scale based on number of participants	On-line Simulations	No	<a href="mailto:info@kognito.com">info@kognito.com</a> <a href="https://kognito.com/products/trauma-informed-practices-for-k12-schools">https://kognito.com/products/trauma-informed-practices-for-k12-schools</a>

## B 3: Additional Resources

This section provides links to information and tools to support schools in learning more about adverse childhood experiences and mitigating toxic stress response. Links to the original Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) study and Iowa ACES data are included. National and state organizations dedicated to disseminating science-based information on ACES, toxic stress and resiliency are also included. In some sections, multiple documents are linked to the same website. These documents, which specifically address mitigating toxic stress response and building resiliency, have been listed separately in order to increase ease of access. All of the resources included in this section are available for download at no charge. Finally, while the included websites and tools are intended to be helpful additional resources, schools are not required to use them.

### Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Study

[Original Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACES\) Study](#)

[Iowa ACES data](#)

### National Resources on ACES and Trauma-Informed Schools

[Center for the Developing Child, Harvard University](#)

The mission of the Center on the Developing Child is to drive science-based innovation that achieves breakthrough outcomes for children facing adversity

[Creating, Supporting and Sustaining Trauma-Informed Schools: a Systems Framework](#) The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) has developed a framework and strategic guidance to implement a trauma informed school within a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework. It includes core areas that will help to focus educational system improvements and organizational changes to address their traumatic stress or loss symptoms. This document is available on-line at no cost.

[Trauma and Learning Policy Institute \(TLPI\)](#) is a collaboration between Massachusetts Advocates for Children and Harvard Law to ensure that children traumatized by exposure to family violence and other adverse childhood experiences succeed in school. Provided resources including Helping Traumatized Children Learn Volumes 1 (2005) and 2 (2013).

[The Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package](#) The Trauma Sensitive Schools Training Package was developed by the National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE), with support from the U.S. Department of Education. NCSSLE is operated by American Institutes for Research (AIR). The *Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package* offers school and district administrators and staff a framework and roadmap for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach school- or districtwide. The trauma training and all materials are available on-line at no cost.

[Center for Integrated Health Solutions](#) website is operated by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The website provides information on trauma-informed care, links to models that could be adapted for implementation by schools, and information on training and technical assistance support.

### Resiliency and Mitigating Toxic Stress Response

[Iowa ACES 360](#)

[Connections Matter](#)

[Connections Matter in Education](#) An Educator's Guide to Addressing Toxic Stress- A white paper

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A as enacted by Senate File 475. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

## **Prevent Child Abuse Iowa**

[The Neurobiology of Stress report](#)

[Child Trends What Schools can do to build resiliency in their students](#)

[The Science of Resiliency, the Developing Child Harvard University](#)

[Building the Core Skills Youth Need in Life: A Guide for Education and Social Service Practitioners](#)

## **Adult Wellness: Self and Collective Care**

[Building Skills Adults Need in Life Guide: A Guide for Practitioners](#)

[Taking Care of yourself checklist](#)

## **School Safety and Emergency Operations Plans**

**School Safety Framework** This framework outlines evidence-based policies and practices for improving school safety and increasing access to mental health supports for children and youth. Includes guidance on reducing triggers during and after active shooter drills.

## References

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