

KRISTINA'S KORNER

ABI Student Ambassador

Resources:

- CRISIS TEXT LINE:
TEXT "HOME" TO 741741
- RIVERSIDE COUNTY CRISIS HOTLINE:
(951)-686-HELP (4357)
- NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE:
(800)-273-8255
- SAFEHOUSE TEXT CRISIS LINE:
(844)-204-0880
- SAFEHOUSE APP:
WHAT'S UP? SAFEHOUSE
- RUHS EMERGENCY TREATMENT SERVICES:
(951) 358-4767
- LOMA LINDA BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE
CENTER (CALL AHEAD):
(909) 558-9344



How Can We Empower Students to Seek Support?

Educating students on the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and suicide risks can empower them to know when and how to reach out for help when they notice warning signs or risk factors in themselves or their peers. I know this is true because this is my story. One year after receiving the training and understanding the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions (through the SUPERS programs as a peer counselor), I have been able to not only better myself mentally, but support those around me. This is essential for our students during the COVID-19 pandemic, where students partaking in distanced learning and hybridized educational programs are experiencing challenges in their education. Lacking social connections with their peers, and struggling with new methods of learning, these new challenges are posing unprecedented effects on the mental health of our youth.

According to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data, suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in the US among youth ages 10-19. Let me restate that, fourth through 12th graders. Youth suicide can be prevented through early detection of students who may be in crisis or struggling with their mental health and connecting those students and their families to resources and treatment services. Transparency and easily-accessible information can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health conditions and reinforce the notion that it is a sign of strength to speak out. Listen to the words of your peers, recognize the challenges in their lives, and support them. Listen with the intent to care and understand.

- Kristina Lopez, ABI Student Ambassador, Ramona High School Student, S.U.P.E.R. Peer Counselor, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Field Advocate

