

## Suicide Awareness and Prevention

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### Abstract

This paper explores the increasing rates of suicide and how we need to make efforts to prevent them from continuing to grow exponentially. The concept of “We Matter” effectively communicates the idea that each person deserves to live. The phrase “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” is a similar concept that I can relate to myself because of my own struggles with mental health. I believe that there are many ways that we can help bring awareness and prevention of suicide and/or suicidal intentions within my student body, relating to the concept of “We Matter.” I believe that paying attention to individuals’ actions and attitudes, telling an adult if something seems off, creating school support groups, and creating a safe environment are all ways that my student body can help those that might be struggling.

*Keywords:* Suicide, support, safe, struggling, student

## Suicide Awareness, Prevention, and How We Can Make a Change

Suicide prevention is something that needs to be more openly talked about in society in this day and age. Statistics on suicide are not getting any better as the years go on. In fact, they are only getting worse (“Suicide rising across the US”, 2018). Many people struggle with depression and other mental illnesses that might cause them to view suicide as an adequate option to help release them from the toilsome life that they live every day. We must help ourselves, and others, to realize that we matter- each and every one of us. We can achieve this through many different ways that direct people away from suicidal thoughts and intentions, and teach them that it’s okay to seek out help.

### **We Matter**

#### **“We Matter”**

The concept of “We Matter” is one way that we can help bring suicide prevention into the light. The phrase “We Matter” means that we, as a people, matter individually, and each one of us is worthwhile. Every living person has the right to continue living, and no one should feel like they do not deserve the right to flourish, or feel like they don’t have the will to continue living. Each of us has a significant role in the world, and it is harder for some than others to realize this.

**“I matter, you matter, we matter.”** The phrase, “I Matter, You Matter, We Matter” has a significant amount of meaning to me. I myself have struggled with not feeling that I matter to the world. I have suffered depression, severe anxiety, and OCD accompanying an eating disorder. Putting all of these together in one pot makes for a perfect foundation for loss of hope and feelings of worthlessness. I have struggled for the last 7 years of my life with most of my mental ailments, and have felt like I myself do not deserve to be alive many times.

**My further experiences.** I have received treatment for my mental wounds, and though it has helped me immensely, I still have my struggles. This is why I think that awareness is so important. No matter how happy or content someone may seem with life, they could have millions of terrible things happening in their head. I know that I was able to put on a great facade when my mental health was actually at its absolute worst.

*Checking the behavior of individuals.* I believe that there are many different ways that we can make efforts within my school's student body to promote suicide awareness and prevention through the concept of "We Matter". One of the methods that I believe will achieve this is watching for signs and signals. When people begin to mention suicide or talk in ways that are concerning, that is a red flag (Suicide and suicidal thoughts, 2018). Even things that may seem insignificant could be indicators that something is wrong. For example, jokes, personality changes, and social isolation are things that may go unnoticed by some, but are most definitely signs that maybe a person is in a depressive headspace.

I know that when I was very mentally unsafe, some people noticed the isolative behavior I was exhibiting. Making jokes that had underlying meanings helped me to cope, so some people noticed that something was off because of it. Some friends and teachers would occasionally reach out and check up on me to make sure I was alright, which was very helpful and encouraging. It made me feel like I was seen, and I wasn't just another head in the crowd.

*Telling an adult if something seems wrong.* Going along with checking people's behavior, telling an adult if something seems off is another way to prevent suicide. People don't make disturbing, self deprecating jokes and say suicidal things for no reason (Suicide and suicidal thoughts, 2018). If more of my student body looked out for these things, I think that we could bring more security and assistance to those that might be struggling.

*Support clubs and/or groups in (my) school(s).* Through my own experiences, having a support group through times of need is immensely helpful. People that have a suicidal (or even depressed) mindset often feel isolated and lonely, so having someone there that understands what they're going through and is there to support them would definitely improve their outlook on life. Having some extra people to make sure they are doing okay is especially important, too. In my opinion, there is not enough emphasis put on the fact that everyone needs a shoulder to lean on—especially when they are dealing with mental health issues.

*Creating a safe environment.* I believe that if the idea that it's okay to ask for help was promoted in my school (or all schools), especially by the student body, less individuals would be struggling by themselves. There is a stigma around being depressed and/or suicidal, so I think that this might weaken it significantly. When I started to make efforts to clear up the stigma surrounding mental health issues, my friends really began to understand how to really support me. Knowing that one is being cared for is powerful, and can do amazing things.

### **Conclusion**

Suicide awareness is something that needs to be talked about more in today's society. There are scary statistics (Suicide rising across the US, 2018), and they are not getting any better in any aspect. The concept "We Matter" is very important because it communicates the idea that every person deserves to live their life. The phrase "I Matter, You Matter, We Matter" is a concept that I can relate to and understand and relate to because of my own experiences with my mental health. The concept "We Matter" can be used and promoted by the student body in my school through different ways that include, but are not limited to, checking the behavior of individuals, telling an adult if something seems wrong, creating support groups in school, and creating a safe environment.

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