



To Whom It May Concern,

The Los Angeles County Youth Workgroup, a subcommittee of the Los Angeles County Suicide Prevention Network (LASPN), is working to implement peer and community-based approaches to suicide prevention that will support a long term vision of zero suicides in Los Angeles County.

As part of our plan to implement peer and community-based approaches, we have identified that promotion of mental health includes a comprehensive approach to wellness. In particular, students need to be taught what mental health is and given the skills to achieve it. Two evidence-based strategies, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mindfulness, have been found to enhance youth academic achievement and wellness, decrease risky behaviors, and improve relationships with peers and teachers. The skills and strategies that children and teens gain through SEL have been shown to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors associated with suicide. Effective SEL helps students to develop skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent ways of handling disputes, as well as develop a sense of connectedness, all of which serve as protective factors for youth against suicide and other self-destructive behaviors during transitions or crises.

Thus, we have established the following objectives:

- (Objective 1:1) by the end of 2024/2025 school year, a minimum of 25% of schools will have a peer-based club, program, wellness center or are actively promoting Teen Line on campus.
- (Objective 1.2) by the end of 2024/2025 school year, a minimum of 25% of schools will implement at least one effective program or strategy intended to reduce risk and strengthen protective factors suitable to meet the needs of their student body.

In order to facilitate adoption of Objective 1:1 and 1:2 by schools within our community, the LA County Youth Workgroup has put together the attached list of evidence-based and promising programs, as well as existing peer-based clubs geared towards youth and schools that aim to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors. All programs were evaluated based upon a set of criteria which included promising evidence, cultural fit to LA, capacity to expand, sustainability and affordability, as well as if they address risk and protective factors for suicide relevant to the needs of LA schools.

The implementation of peer and community-based approaches to suicide prevention that support our long term vision of zero suicides in Los Angeles County requires a collective effort; therefore, **we are asking you to implement, if you are not already doing so, at least one of the risk and protective or peer-based programs listed in the attached document.**

If you're unsure where to start, have questions about programs and 'fit' for your district and schools, or have concerns about anything else, we are available to help. We will also be holding virtual "round tables", from specific programs which will include short presentations and time for questions and answers on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 9am – 12pm: [Learn more and register here](#). Further, if you have implemented any of the listed programs or other programs, we would love to hear from you.

For any of the above, please contact us at [info@lasuicidepreventionnetwork.org](mailto:info@lasuicidepreventionnetwork.org).