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To: District Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Public Schools
Administrators of Public, Charter, and Nonpublic Schools

From: Renée L. Rider

Subject: Resources for Schools on Trauma-Informed Care and Youth Witnessing a Suicide

The Department would like to share our concern about information recently received that a video has gone viral on social media showing a twelve year old girl from Georgia apparently live streaming her suicide. We have also been informed that some of our adolescent mental health facilities have seen youth experiencing trauma from viewing this video.

In light of this tragic and unsettling situation, the New York State Education Department would like to take this opportunity to express both sadness and concern. As we know, school staff roles are critical in the aftermath of such prominent tragic events, and can help reduce the impact of trauma on students and their families by recognizing, responding and appropriately referring youth who may be experiencing trauma. It is also important for all of us to be reminded that schools cannot address these issues alone. Therefore, we must turn to other child-serving agencies that have expertise on addressing trauma and providing necessary and appropriate supports to our children and families. As such, the Department reached out to fellow State Agencies¹ to seek resourceful materials and informational links to assist schools (see below).

Please review these resources to determine whether they meet your local level needs, and also reach out to your community-based organizations that provide mental health services, suicide prevention, and trauma-informed care. Once again, thank you for everything you do to help and support our students, families and communities. Should you need any additional information or have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our Office of Student Support Services at 518-486-6090 or studentsupportservices@nysed.gov.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of our young people and their families.

¹ New York State Office of Mental Health; New York State Department of Health; New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services; New York State Office of Children and Family Services and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services.

Targeted Resources

Concepts for Understanding Trauma Responses in Children and Families when Injury/Death is Witnessed www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/parents-caregivers/what-is-cts/12-core-concepts

Listen, Protect, Connect – A Guide for Teachers for Youth Witnessing a Suicide <https://sowkweb.usc.edu/download/about/centers-affiliations/ncscb-psychological-first-aid-students-and-teachers>

Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Trauma; Assisting Schools in Addressing Trauma www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/school-personnel/trauma-toolkit

After a Suicide Toolkit for Schools - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention <https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/toolkit.pdf>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center will help schools create safe messages on topic of suicide <http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/migrate/library/SafeMessagingrevised.pdf>

Guide for Families on Talking after a Suicide Attempt (free DVD) www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/talk2kids/

Additional Resources

Suicide Prevention Center New York (SPCNY) - What Every Parent Needs to Know- Recognizing Suicide Risk in your Child http://media.wix.com/ugd/ef5da1_7c7443b47ef7483a81e4ee3a9a68d08a.pdf

SPCNY- What Every Teacher Needs to Know- Recognizing Suicide Risk in Students http://media.wix.com/ugd/ef5da1_176748adb283415989c01f1f3d26d9f0.pdf

SPCNY - What Every Student Needs to Know- The Warning Signs of Suicide Risk http://media.wix.com/ugd/ef5da1_3408fa10b4b94c7c8e073039dfd95d26.pdf

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Suicide Prevention and Awareness www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention

Suicide Prevention Center New York www.preventsuicideNY.org

New York State Center for School Health <http://bit.ly/nyscshsuicideresources>