

Closing a Conversation with Students After a Suicide
In closing conversations with students using possible positive ‘scripts’ should be the goal.

KEY TALKING POINTS	WHAT TO SAY
<p>Give accurate information about suicide.</p> <p>Suicide is a complicated behavior. Help students understand the complexities.</p>	<p><i>Suicide is not caused by a single event, such as fighting with parents, or a bad grade, or the breakup of a relationship.</i></p> <p><i>In most cases, suicide is caused by mental health disorders like depression or substance abuse problems. Mental health disorders affect the way people feel and prevent them from thinking clearly and rationally. They can find themselves in a dark place that with help can move towards a place of hope. Having a mental health disorder is nothing to be ashamed of.</i></p> <p><i>Celebrities as well as people in our community and school community experience mental health disorders or substance abuse issues and discover strategies how to survive and thrive, moving forward on the path of life..</i></p> <p><i>There are effective treatments to help people who struggle with mental health disorders or substance abuse problems. Suicide is never the answer to end the pain.</i></p>
<p>Address blaming and scapegoating.</p> <p>It is common to try to answer the question “why” by blaming others for the suicide.</p>	<p><i>Blaming others for the suicide is not helpful, creates needless pain and it’s not fair. Doing that can hurt another person deeply.</i></p> <p><i>Suicide is a “response” to forces and interactions that are complex. A ‘Perfect Storm’ can be created, that can be managed by seeking help. Storms do pass.</i></p>
<p>Do not talk about the method.</p> <p>Talking about the method can create images that are upsetting, and it may increase the risk of imitative behavior by vulnerable youth.</p>	<p><i>Let’s focus on talking about the feelings we are left with after _____’s death and figure out the best way to manage them.</i></p>
<p>Address anger.</p> <p>Accept expression of anger at the deceased. Help students know these feelings are normal.</p>	<p><i>It is okay to feel angry. These feelings are normal, and it doesn’t mean that you didn’t care about _____. You can be angry at someone’s behavior and still care deeply about that person.</i></p>
<p>Address feelings of responsibility.</p> <p>Help students understand that the only person responsible for the suicide is the deceased.</p> <p>Reassure those who have exaggerated feelings of responsibility, such as thinking they should have done something to save the deceased or seen the signs.</p>	<p><i>This death is not your fault. We cannot always see the signs because a suicidal person may hide them well.</i></p> <p><i>We cannot always predict someone’s behavior.</i></p>
<p>Encourage help-seeking.</p> <p>Encourage students to seek help from a trusted adult if they or a friend are feeling depressed or suicidal.</p>	<p><i>We are always here to help you through any problem, no matter what. Who are the people you would go to if you or a friend were feeling worried, depressed, or had thoughts of suicide?</i></p>