

# EDUCATING SECONDARY STUDENTS ON DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

Signs of Suicide: An Evidence-based Universal  
Approach

## Presented By:

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# School Health Professional Grant

- Enhance the presence of school health professionals (Nurses, Psychologists, Social Workers and Counselors)
- Provide substance abuse and behavioral health care to students who are struggling in these areas
- Implement substance abuse and suicide prevention education
- Provide resources to students and families

# Thompson School District

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- Located in Larimer County
- Covers 362 sq. miles
- Includes Loveland, Berthoud, Johnstown and Fort Collins
- Over 2,000 employees
  - ▣ Largest employer in Loveland and Berthoud

# Thompson School District

- Serves about 16,000 students
- Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade
  - 13 early childhood centers
  - 20 elementary schools
  - 1 K-8<sup>th</sup>
  - 5 middle schools
  - 5 high schools
  - 2 charter schools

# Objectives:

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- 1) The participant will be able to recognize the significance of the increasing suicide rates
- 2) The participant will be able to summarize the Signs of Suicide program, including the overall goals of the program
- 3) The participant will be able to describe how Thompson School District is implementing the Signs of Suicide program in the middle schools

“SUICIDAL THOUGHTS OR  
BEHAVIORS ARE BOTH  
DAMAGING AND  
DANGEROUS AND ARE  
THEREFORE CONSIDERED A  
PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY.”

*NAMI*

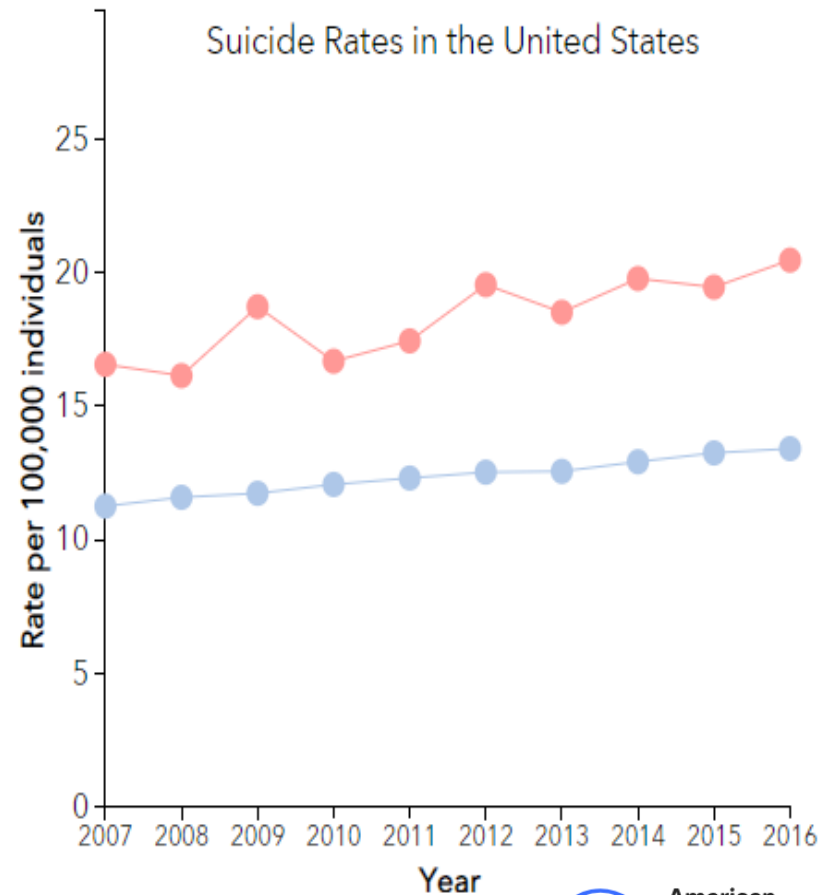
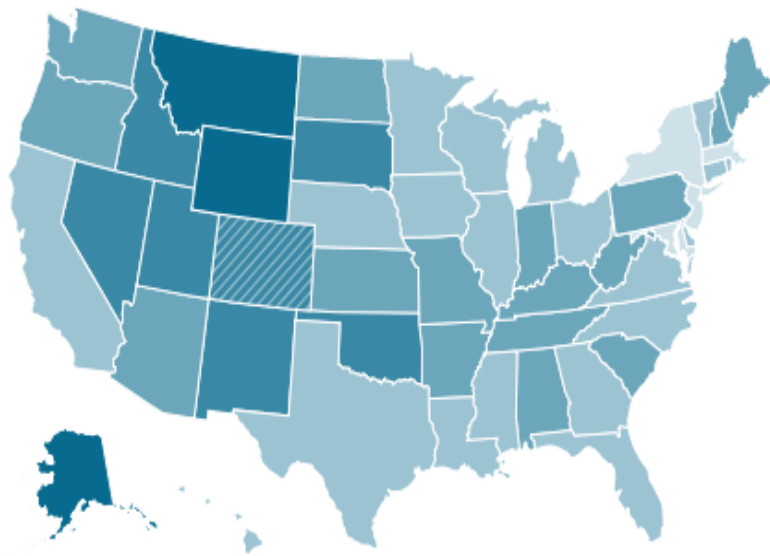
Half of ALL people who died by suicide did *NOT*  
have a known mental health condition

# National Statistics

- Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S.
- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for 10-24 year olds after unintentional injury
- 44,965 Americans die each year by suicide
- 1 person dies by suicide every 13 minutes
- On average, there are 123 suicides per day



# Suicide Rates in the United States

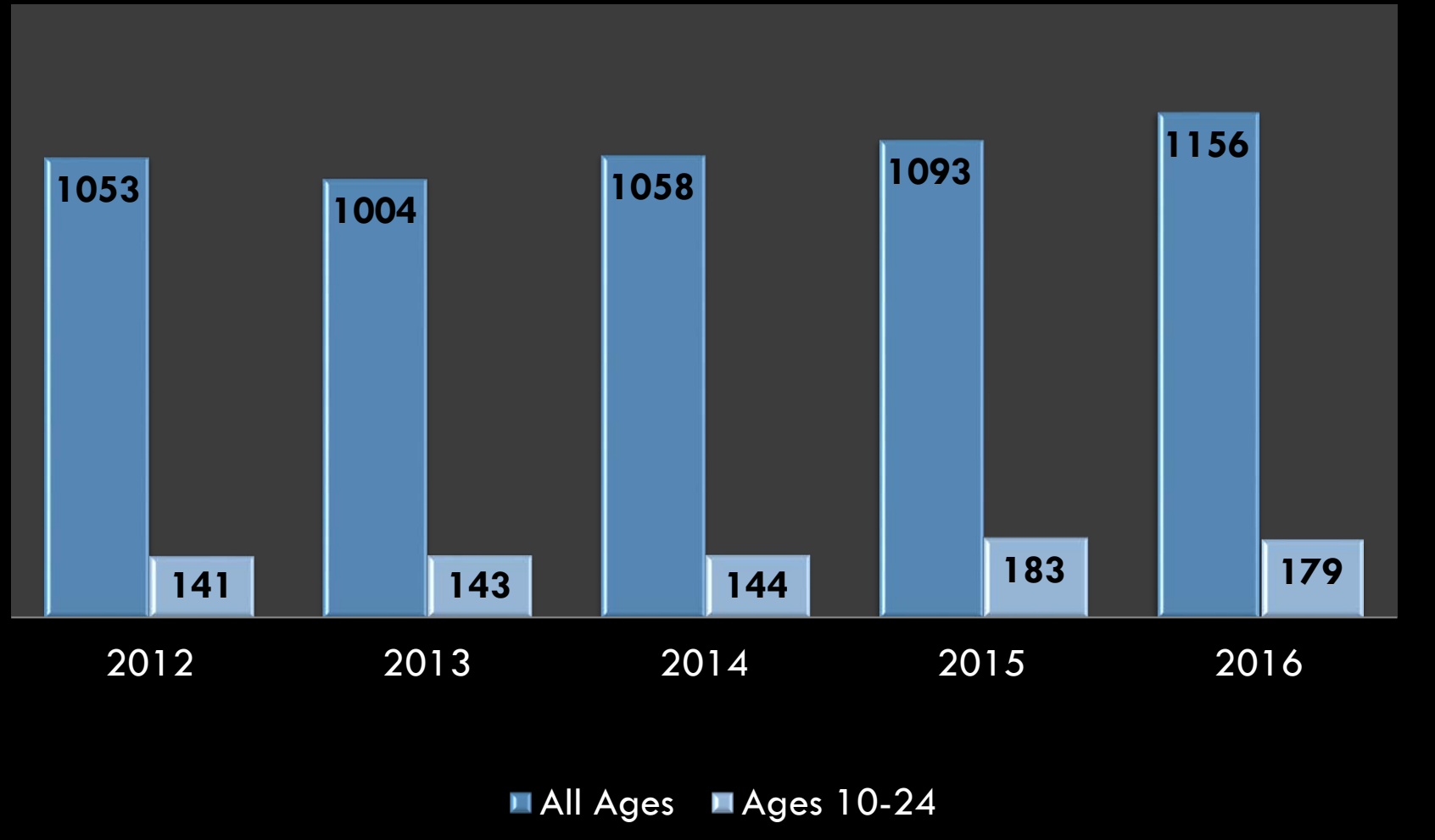


<https://afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/>

# Colorado Statistics

- 2016: Suicide was the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for all Coloradans
- Suicide became the leading cause of death for youth and young adults ages 10-24
- In 2016: Colorado had its highest number of suicide deaths ever recorded = 1,156
- 2017: Nearly 1 in 8 Coloradans reported experiencing poor mental health in the past month

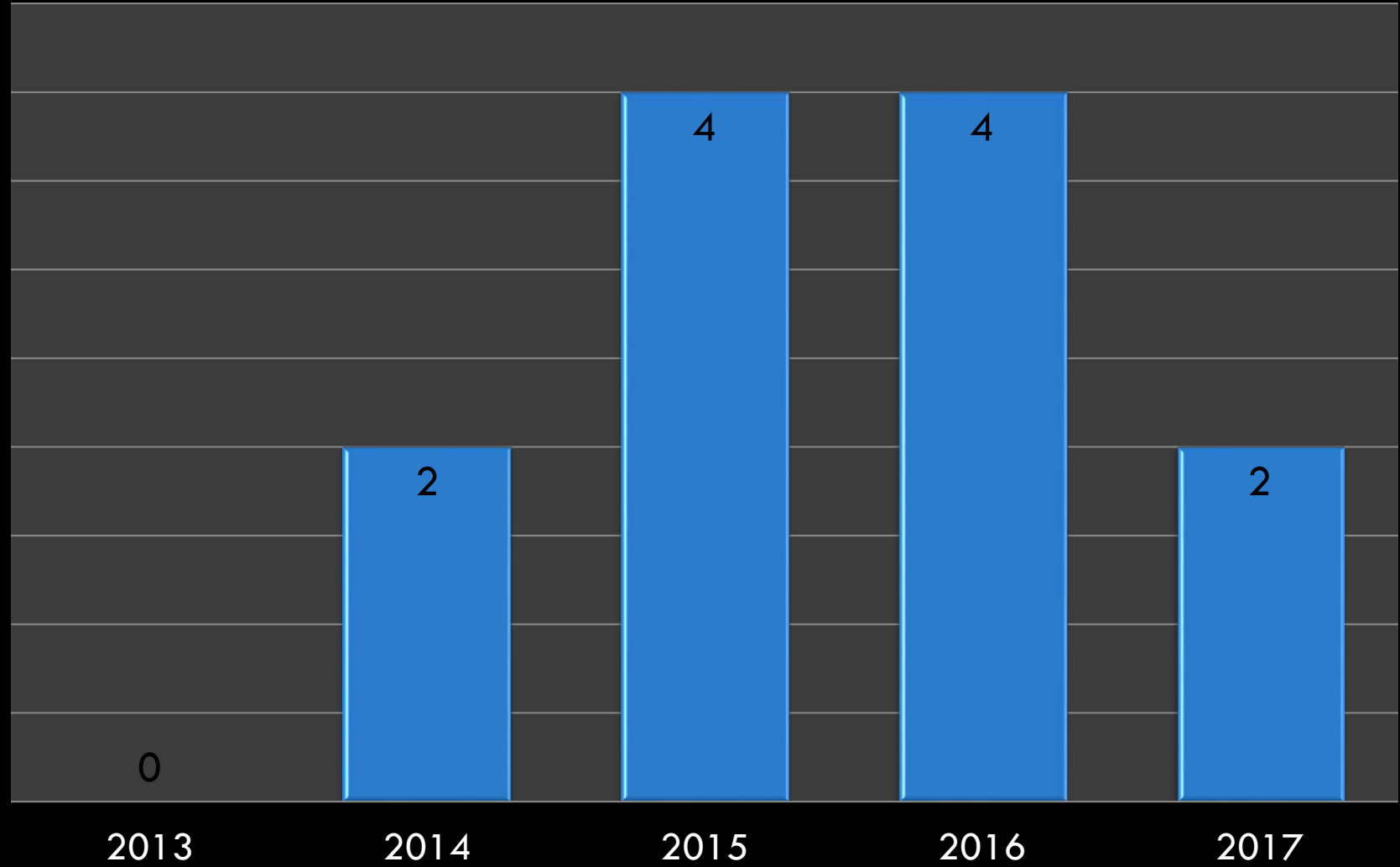
## Colorado Health Institute: Number of Deaths by Suicide



# Larimer County Statistics

- In 2017, there were 75 confirmed suicides (2 were under the age of 18)
- Suicides accounted for 2.7% of all deaths recorded in the county
- 21% were active in mental health treatment
- 61% had prior ideation or attempts
- 72% had alcohol and/or drugs present

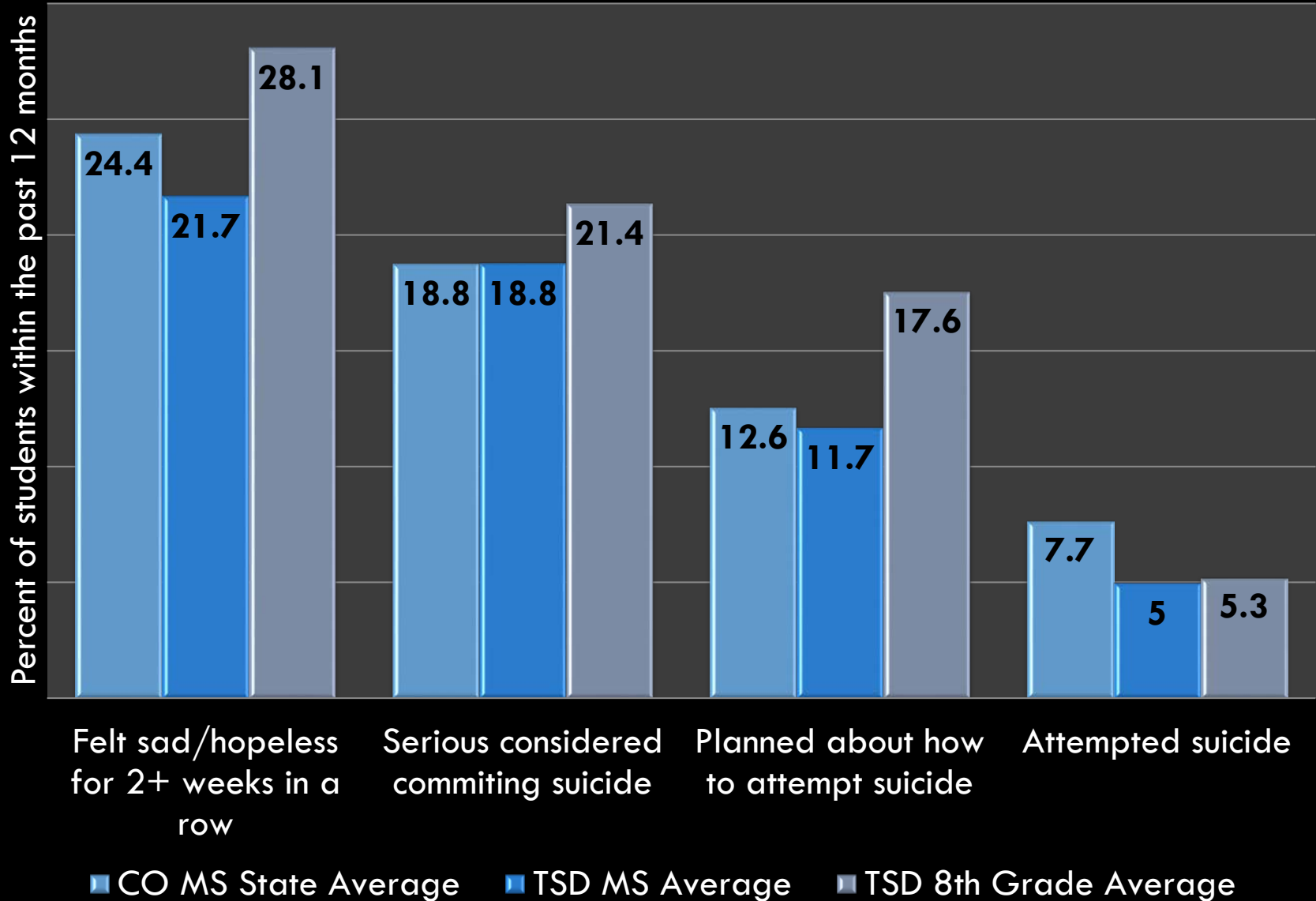
# Number of Confirmed Juvenile (<18) Suicide Deaths in Larimer County, Colorado



# Healthy Kids Colorado Survey

- State-wide anonymous health survey
- Middle and High School students participate
- Optional participation; parental opt-out option
- Conducted during odd-number years
- 2017, sampled approximately 56,000 youth
  - 190 random High School and Middle Schools statewide
  - TSD's response rate was 77% with 480 Middle School students responding

# 2017 HKCS Middle School Results:



# Factors that can help reduce youth suicide attempts:

- Youth who have a trusted adult to go to for help are **3.5x LESS** likely to attempt suicide
- Youth who feel safe at school are **3.2x LESS** likely to attempt suicide
- Youth who participate in extracurricular activities are **1.7x LESS** likely to attempt suicide



# Signs of Suicide

- Suicide Prevention Program
- Evidence-Based
- Universal
- School-Based for Middle & High School Students



SOS IS THE *ONLY* YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM THAT HAS DEMONSTRATED AN IMPROVEMENT IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ADAPTIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT SUICIDE RISK AND DEPRESSION, AS WELL AS A *REDUCTION* IN ACTUAL SUICIDE ATTEMPTS.

SOS has shown a *reduction* in self-reported suicide attempts by 40-64%

# Goals of Signs of Suicide

- Decrease Suicide and Suicide attempts by increasing student knowledge and adaptive attitudes about depression
- Encourage personal help-seeking on behalf of a friend
- Reduce the stigma of mental illness and acknowledge the importance of seeking help or treatment
- Engage parents and school staff as partners in prevention through “GateKeeper” Education
- Encourage schools to develop community-based partnerships to support student mental health

# TSD's Goals in Implementing Signs of Suicide

- Educating that depression is a treatable illness
- Suicide can be prevented
- Help identify warning signs of depression & suicide
- Help themselves or a friend by talking to a responsible adult about their concerns
- Learn to identify trusted adults in the schools and community

# Planning

- ❑ Approval
- ❑ Parent Information
  - ❑ Letter and Opt-out form
- ❑ Parental Education Sessions
  - ❑ Safeguarding Our Youth
- ❑ On-going Communication

# Classroom Implementation

- ❑ Introduction
  - ❑ Confidentiality
- ❑ Video
- ❑ Discussion
  - ❑ Engagement
- ❑ Screener
- ❑ Information Folders
  - ❑ Safe2Tell

# Safe2Tell

- ❑ Provides students, parents and community members a safe way to report information about any issues that concern their safety or the safety of others.

# Safe2Tell

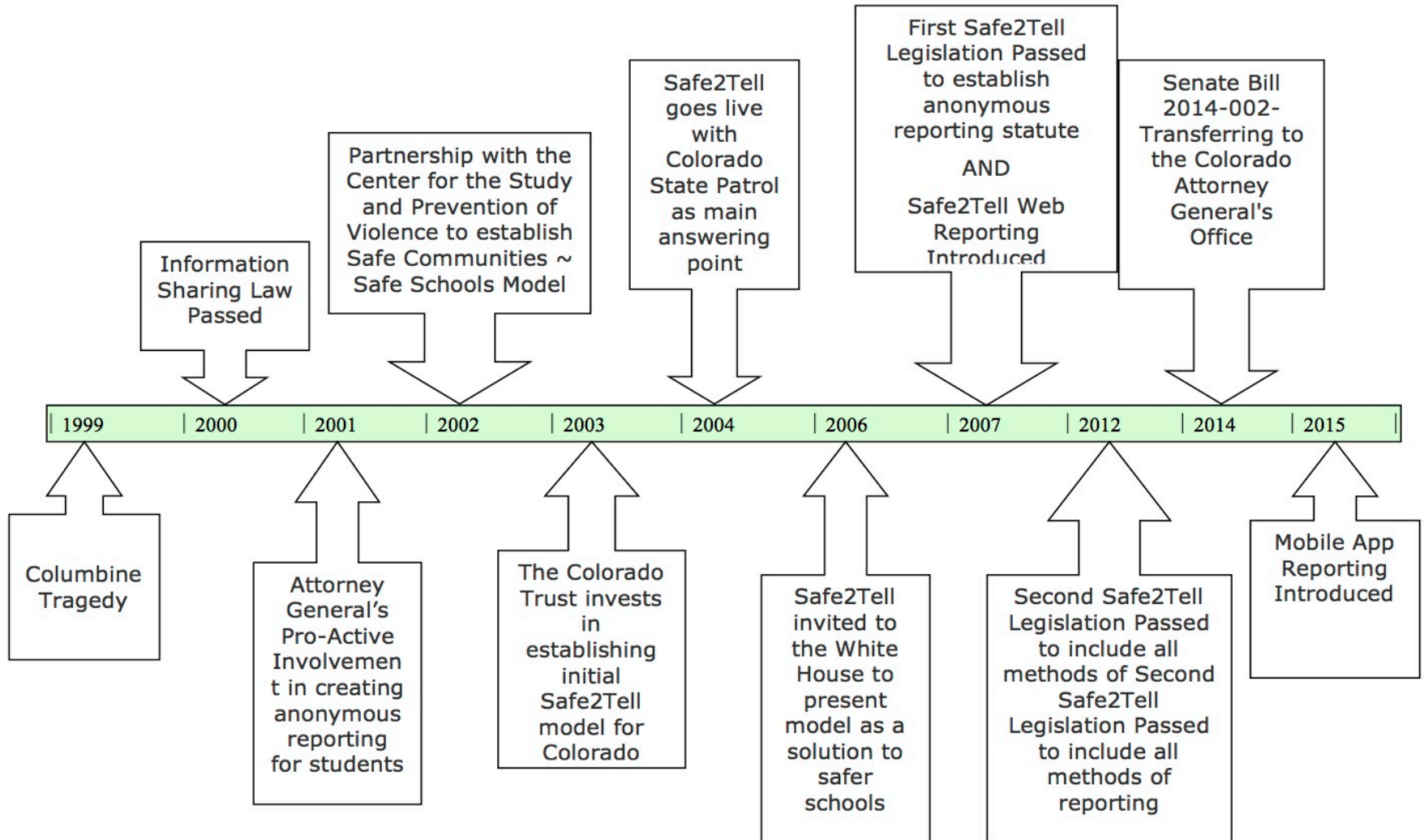
- Anonymous
  - State Law ((C.R.S. Section 24-31-601 et seq.)) Protects the reporter
- Available to all Colorado schools, students, teachers, and parents
- Calls are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week by trained Colorado State Patrol Dispatchers
- Every tip submitted is thoroughly investigated once given to the appropriate school and/or law enforcement agency
- Web reporting and mobile app options allow reporting parties to upload photos and social media posts

## 3 Ways to Report:

- Call → 1-877-542-SAFE (7233)
- App → Safe2Tell Colorado
- Website → [www.safe2tell.org](http://www.safe2tell.org)



# Safe2Tell



# Outcomes and Data

2016-2017 Pilot

2017-2018 Implementation

2017-2018 Safe2Tell

# 2016-2017 SOS Pilot

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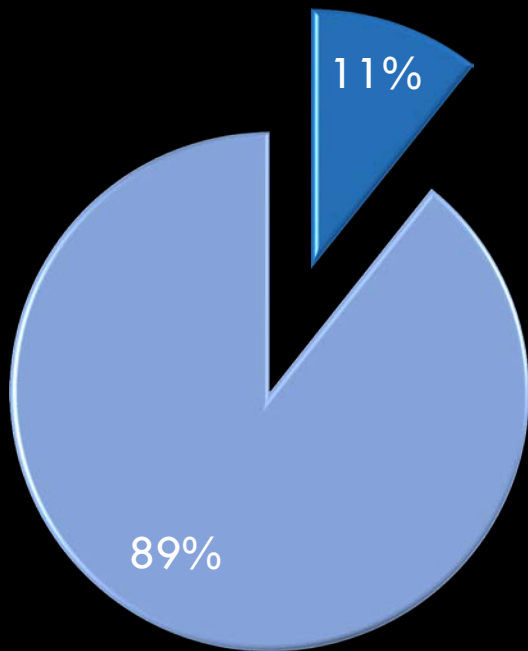
- 3 out of the 5 middle schools
- Varying grades
- 584 students
- 15% of students requested/received additional support

# 2017-2018 Implementation

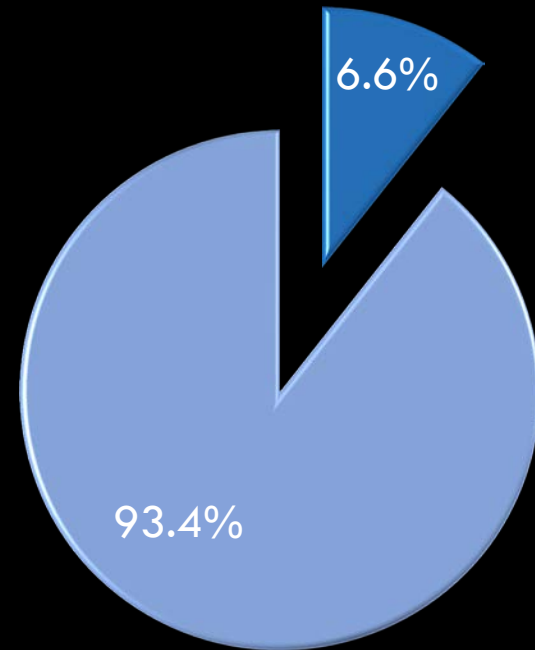
- All 5 middle schools, as well as the K-8
- Emphasis on 6<sup>th</sup> graders
  - All 6<sup>th</sup> graders, with exception to one school
  - Some schools educated entire student population, others chose specific grades
  - 2,191 students
    - 93.9% of targeted students

# Outcomes & Data

Students Who Reported Concerns About a Peer

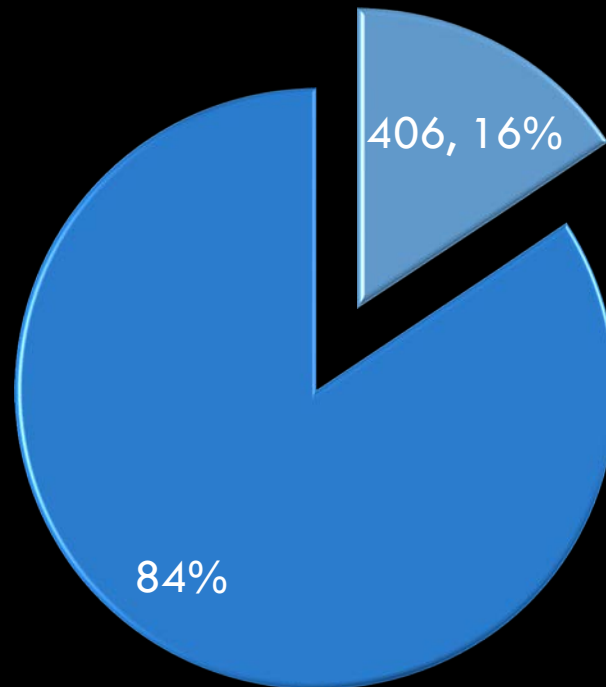


Students Who Requested Support for Self



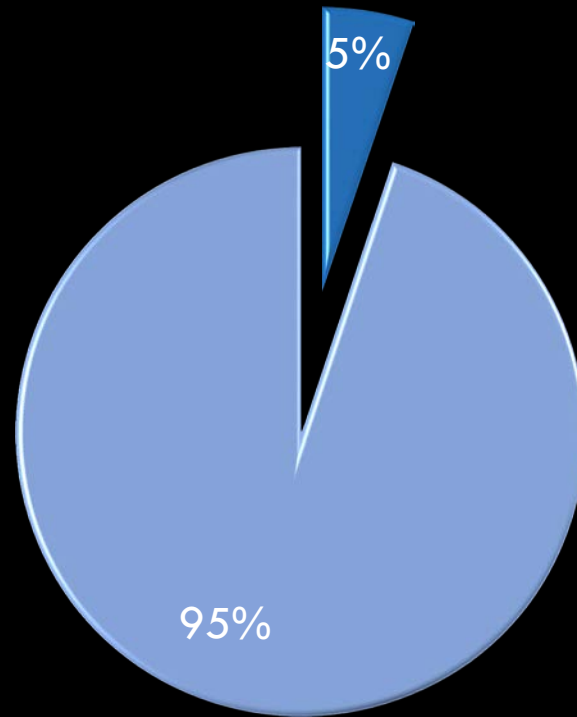
# Outcomes & Data

Total Students Who Received Additional Support



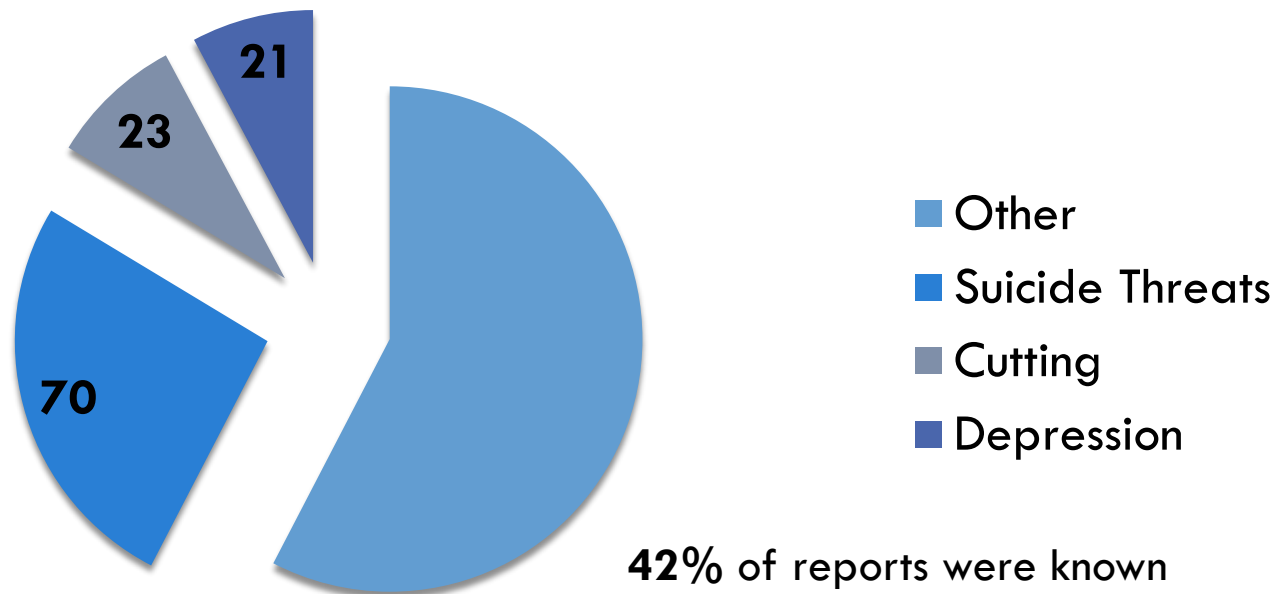
# Outcomes & Data

Students who did not identify an in-school trusted adult



# Outcomes & Data

## TSD Safe2Tell Reports 9/1/2017 to 6/30/2018 (269)



**42%** of reports were known to be connected to a mental health concern/need



# Recommendations & Growth Opportunities

- Continue building follow-up communication with school counselors
- Advisory teachers review Safe2Tell throughout year
- Continue to enhance partnerships with other programs offered
  - YMHFA, Sources of Strength, Wellness Nights and Community Agencies
- Have more school staff educated/aware of the SOS program
  - Participate in the 'Safeguarding Our Youth Training'

# Recommendations & Growth Opportunities

## □ Follow-up Survey

- To address if students have retained the information/skills/resources and to assess if they are utilizing these
- Pilot Follow-up for the 2018-2019 year and continue to add to this

# References

- <https://mentalhealthscreening.org/programs/sos-signs-of-suicide>
- <https://safe2tell.org/?q=how-it-works>
- [www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions/related-conditions/suicide](http://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions/related-conditions/suicide)
- [www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml)
- [www.afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/](http://www.afsp.org/about-suicide/suicide-statistics/)
- [www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention](http://www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention)
- [https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PW\\_ISVP\\_OSP-2016-2017-Legislative-Report.pdf](https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PW_ISVP_OSP-2016-2017-Legislative-Report.pdf)
- <https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/suicides-colorado-reach-all-time-high>
- **Colorado Health Access Survey:**  
[www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/unmet-challenge](http://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/unmet-challenge)
- [www.larimer.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2018/2017-annual\\_report.pdf](http://www.larimer.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2018/2017-annual_report.pdf)
- <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/hkcs>