

Suicide Postvention to Prevention: Best Practices in an Interdisciplinary Approach to Support Students and Staff

Presented by Palo Alto Unified School District Staff
September 30, 2016

Learning Objectives

1. Advocate importance of practice-driven interdisciplinary postvention programming to address student and staff needs after a student death by suicide
2. Describe at least 3 best practices for supporting a school community during the anniversary of the death of a student by suicide.
3. Describe suicide prevention activities

Agenda

- Palo Alto's Story
- Conceptual Framework for this Presentation
- Postvention Efforts
- Intervention Efforts
- Prevention Efforts
- Summary

Sharing Our Story

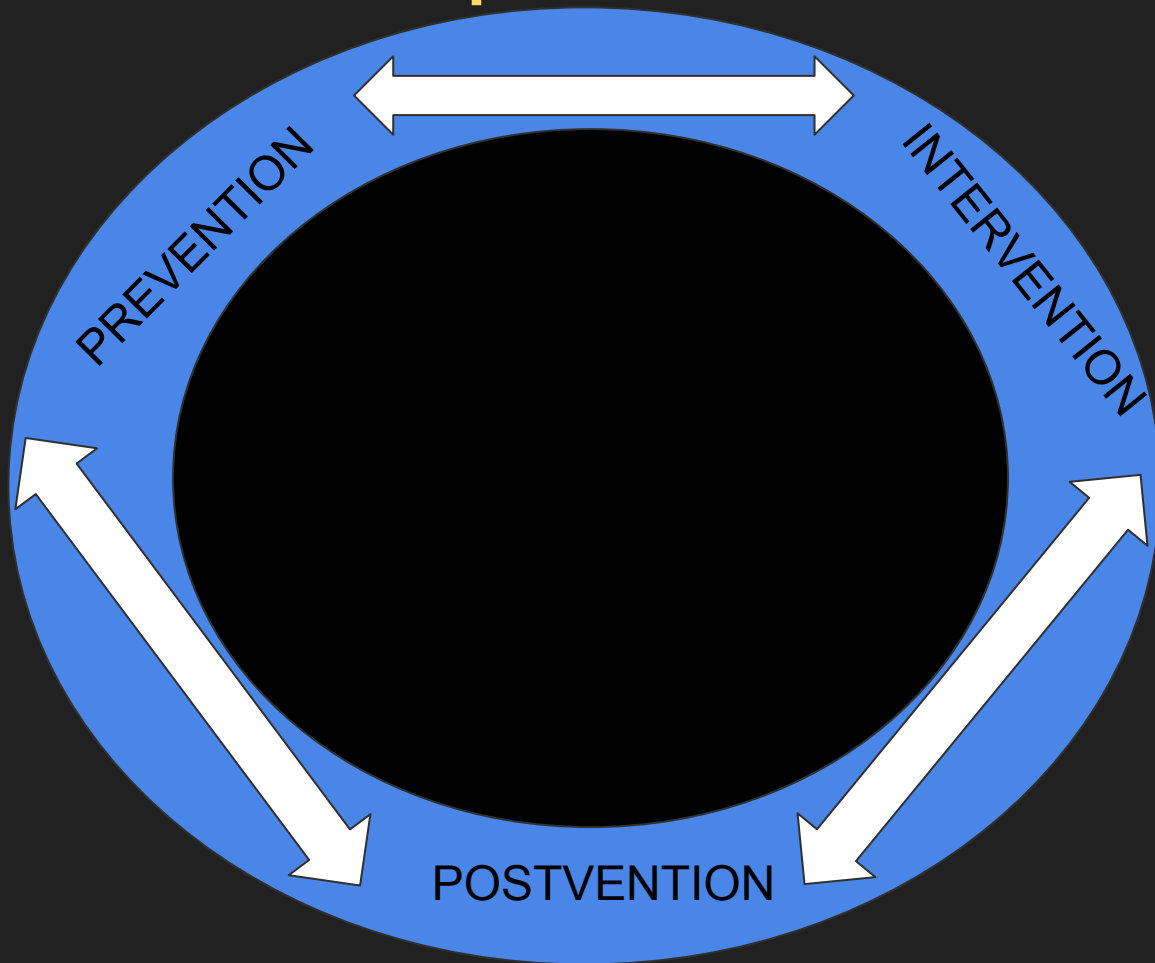


Sharing Our Story

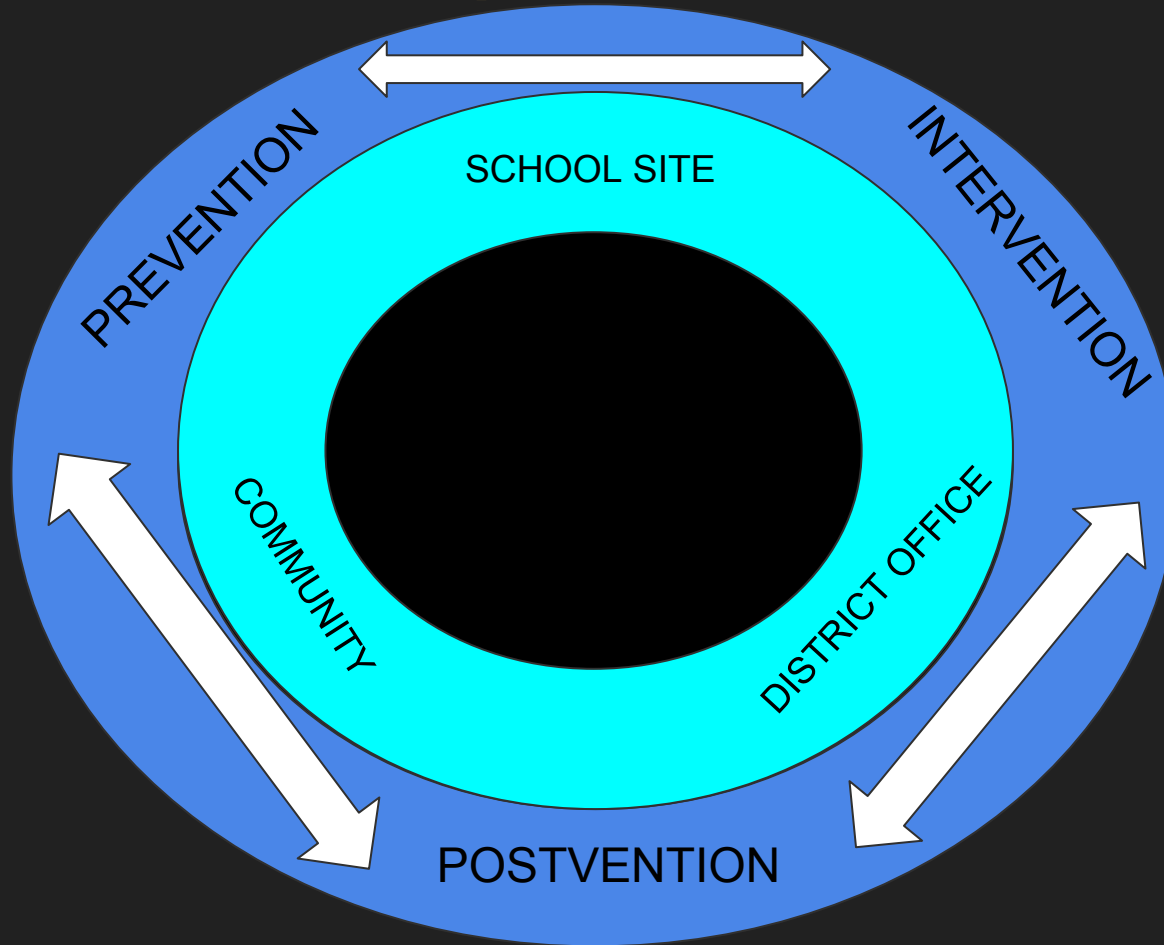
1. Challenges and Successes of Years Past
2. Honoring Intervention and Postvention Efforts
3. Applauding Prevention Initiatives to Date



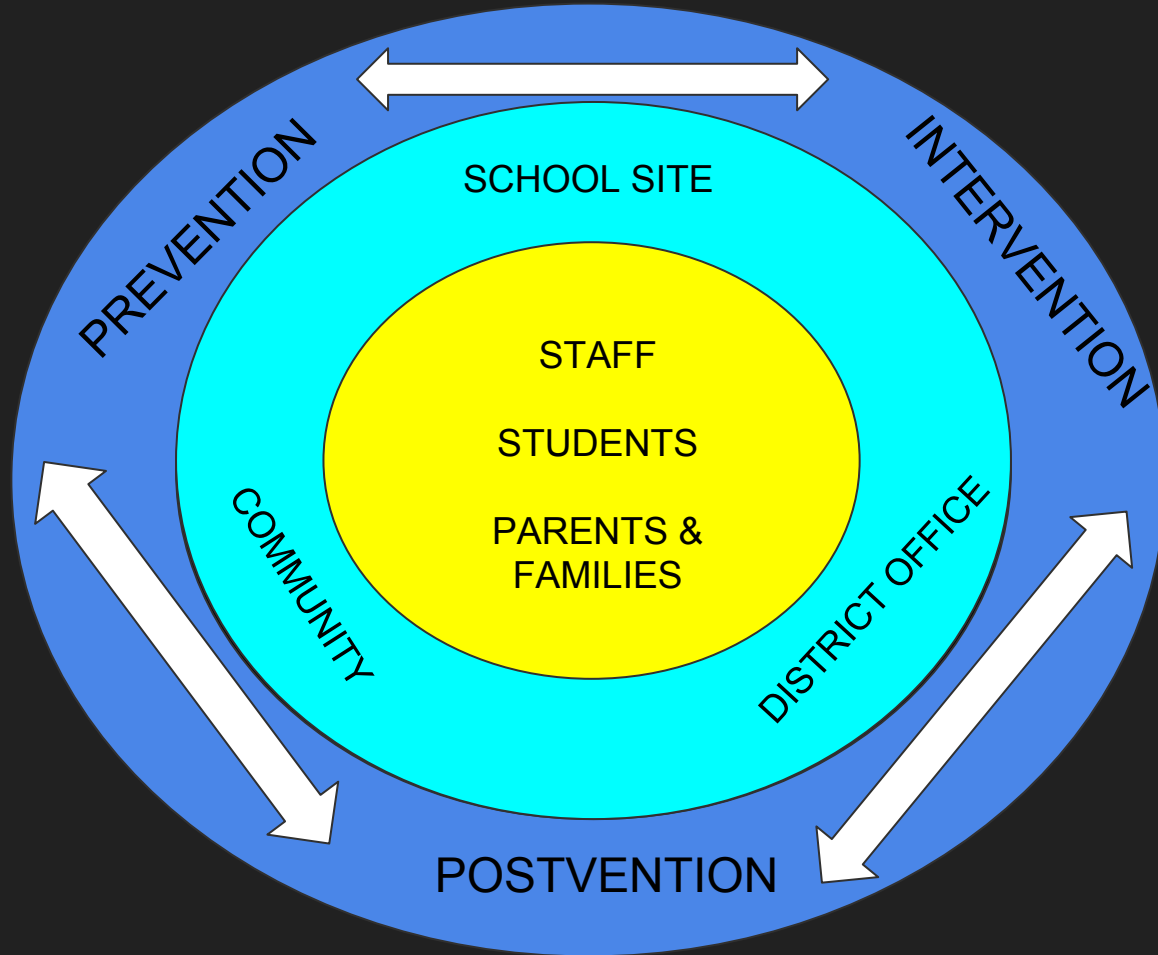
A Conceptual Framework



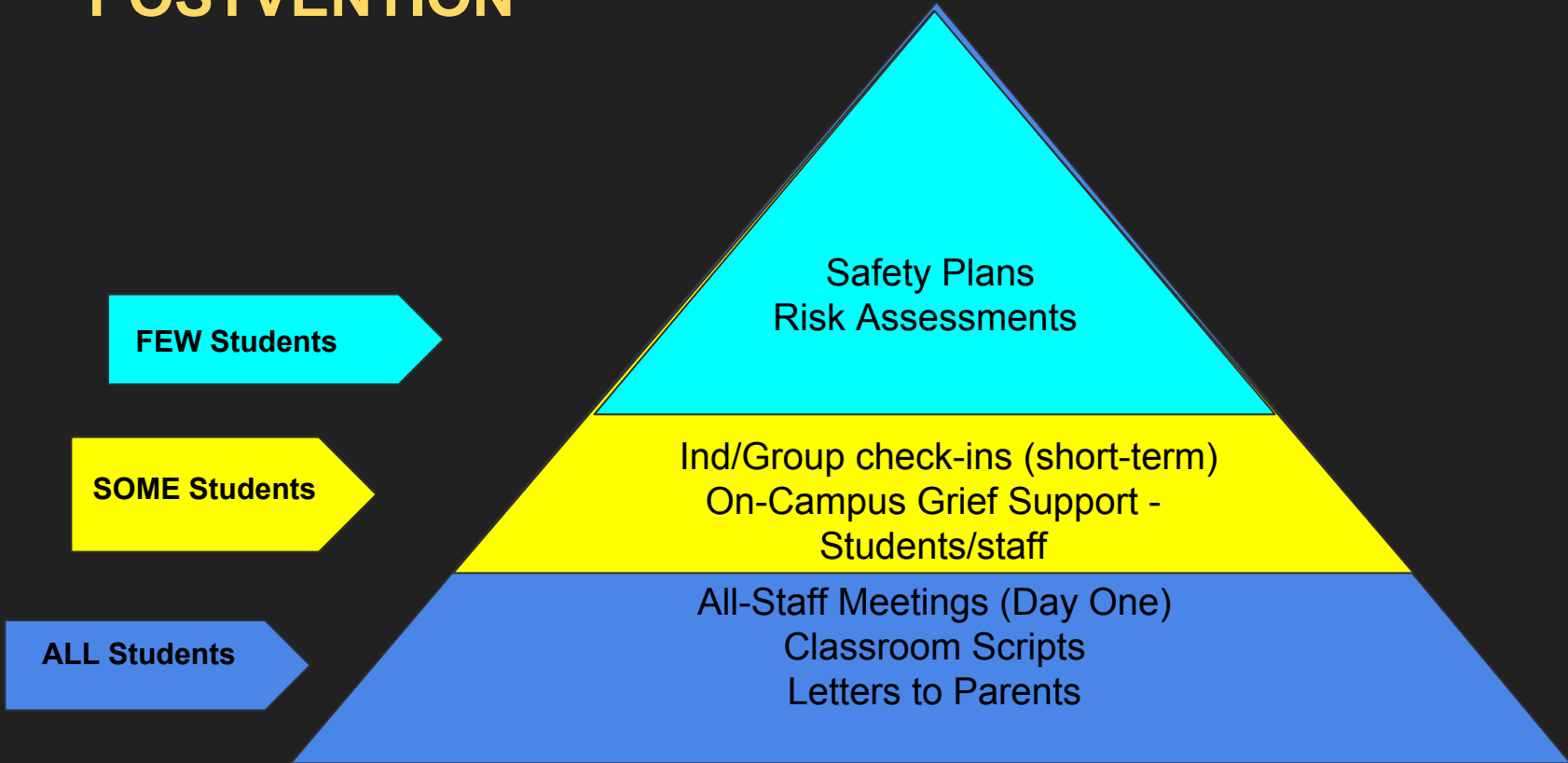
A Conceptual Framework



A Conceptual Framework



POSTVENTION



After a Death by Suicide - the first 24 hours

Student Support Team	Staff Support Team	Communication Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify, monitor, and support students at risk● Monitor period attendance and call home for well-being check● Grief support on campus for all students (i.e.,use memorialization best practices)● Disable auto dialer (attendance) for student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify, monitor, and support staff at risk● Read classroom scripts, as needed● Follow deceased student's schedule● Access to adult crisis counseling● Substitute teacher coordination● Food/Water for CRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Call emergency staff meeting● Author script to be read in classes● Author email to stakeholder groups● Hold periodic CRT check-ins● After school staff meeting

Anniversaries and Long-term Best Practices

- Maintain school's goal of balancing learning and wellbeing
- Engage families as much as possible to best inform our response
- Provide psychoeducation to staff about grief responses and memorializations
- Remind staff to recognize signs of distress in class and how to activate school-based support
- Facilitate targeted support and outreach to vulnerable students, staff and close friends, peer groups or teammates as appropriate

Anniversaries and Long-term Best Practices

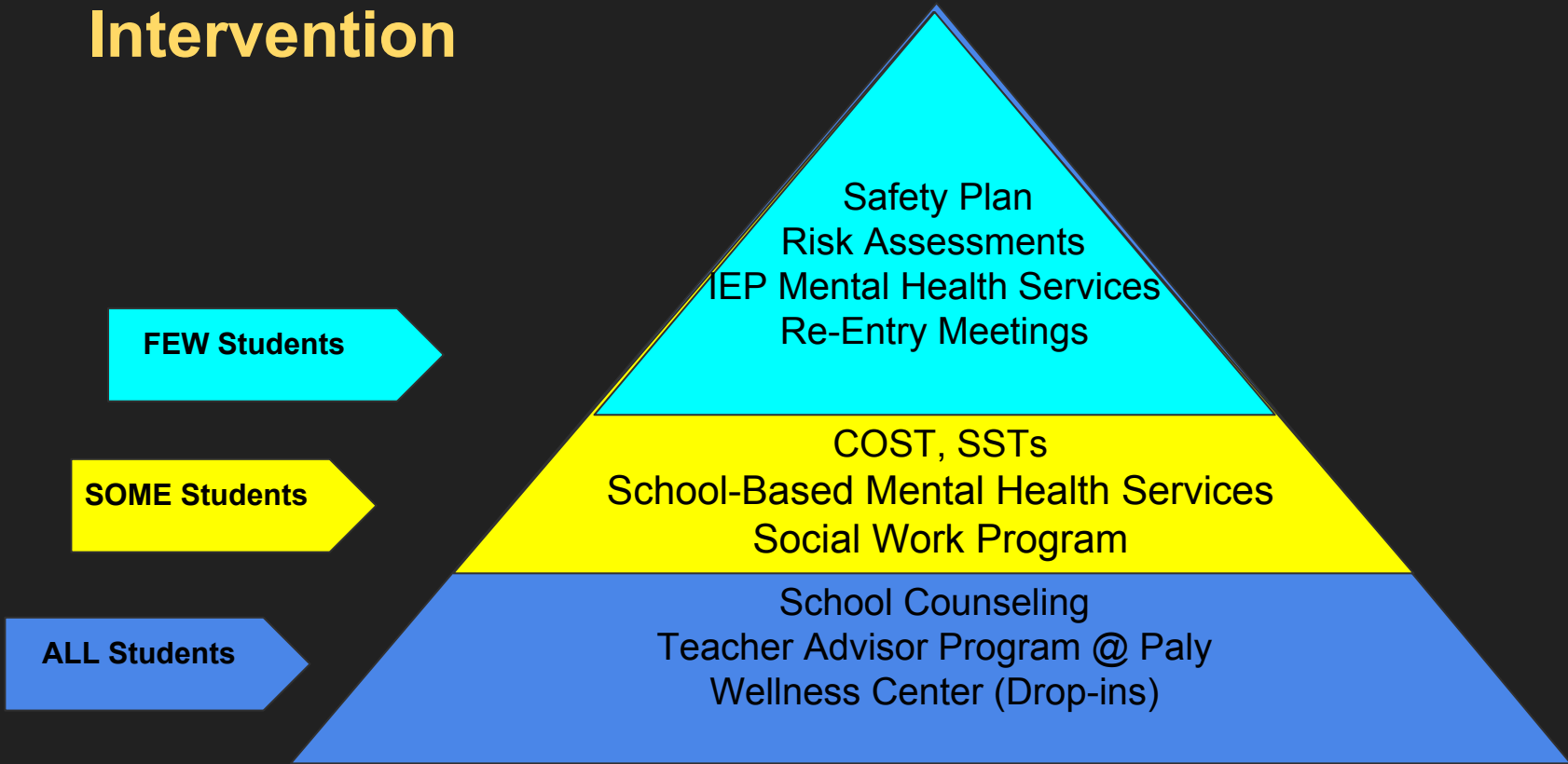
Dilemmas you may face:

- Empty Chair
- Yearbook
- Diploma
- Graduation
- Reason for Death

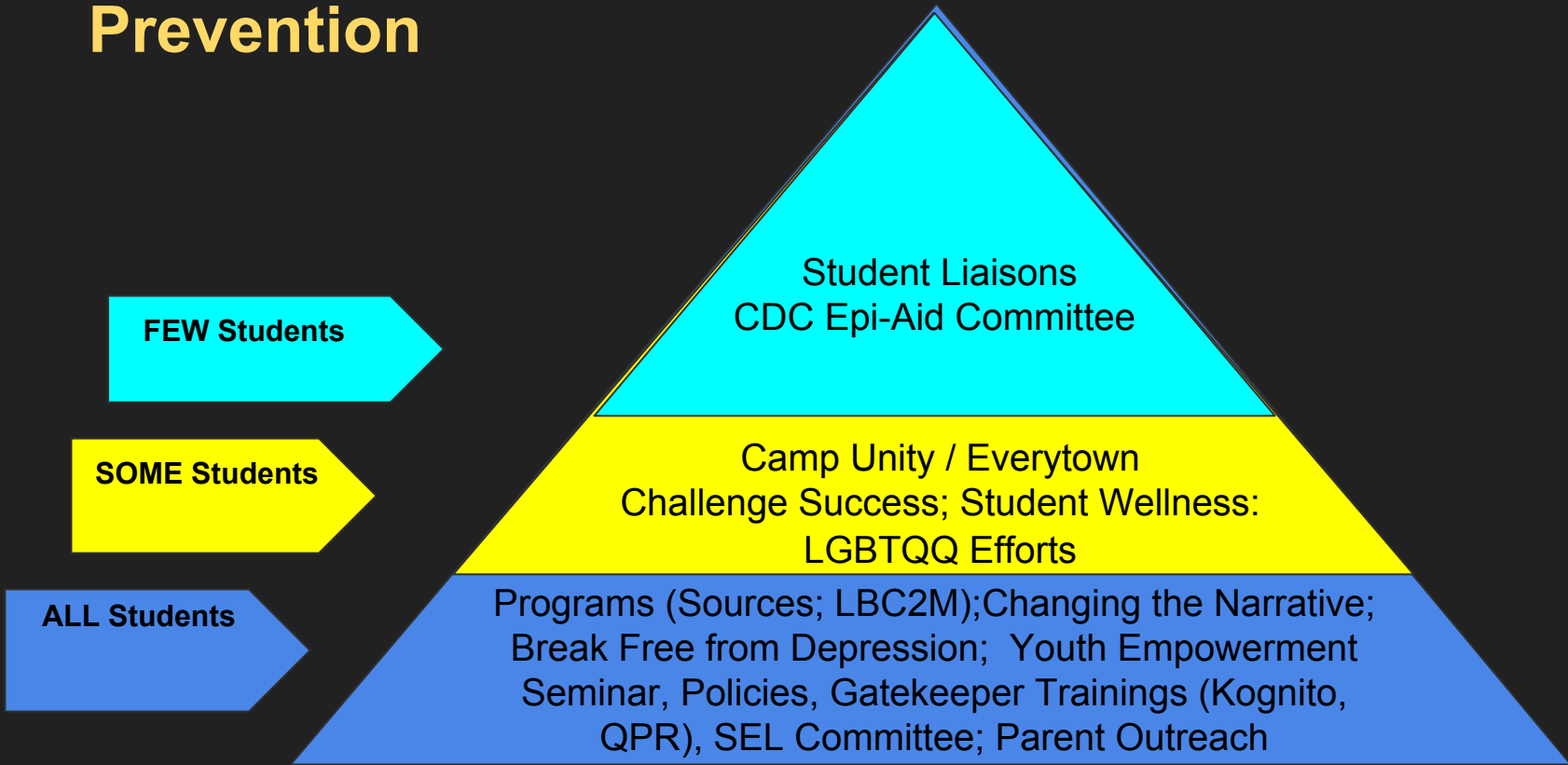
Guiding Principles

- Promote and practice healthy memorializations at school
- Life affirming or life giving (less focus on deaths)
- Encourage students and staff to engage in opportunities for wellness, resiliency or help-seeking

Intervention



Prevention

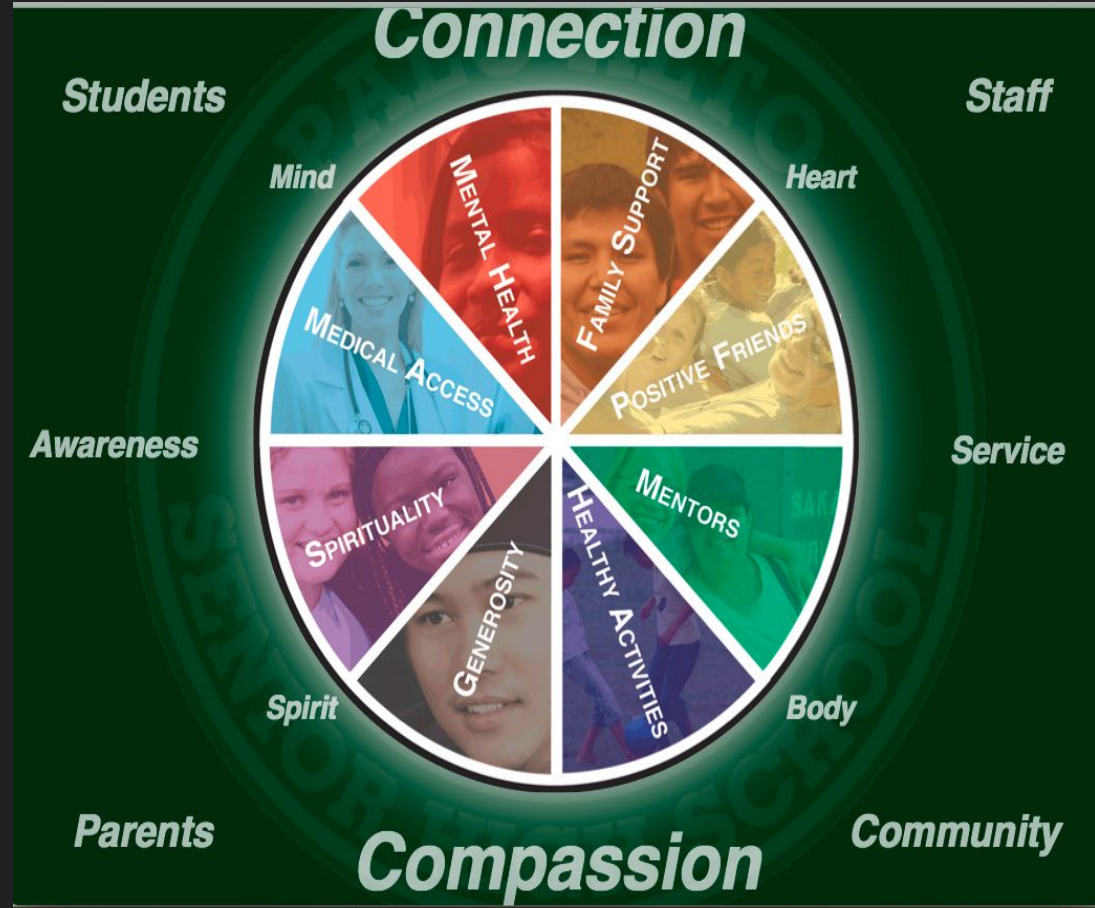


What is Sources of Strength?

- **Evidence-based** mental health and wellness program
- Utilizing the power of peer-to-peer **social networking**
- To **change unhealthy norms** and cultures
- To **prevent downstream outcomes** such as bullying, substance abuse, violence, and suicide
- By creating an **upstream** culture of **connectedness, resiliency, and strength**

Why is Sources a Peer-Led Program?

- If unhealthy behaviors can permeate a social network, then so can an epidemic of health - a contagion of strength
- Adolescents reference peer group more than any other
- Students have the most power to change cultural norms. We must bring their voices into the mix





What is LETS BC2M?

- Student-led club where teens learn & explore mental health topics in safe and supportive environment.
- Provides education, training, peer support & community outreach
- Normalizes conversations about mental wellness & eliminate stigma before it becomes ingrained.
- It is for **ALL** teens interested in mental health/wellness.



Start the conversation. End the stigma.



LETS BC2M Club

We're Talking About Mental Health....Are You?



Continuous Improvement

- District Leadership
 - CDC
- Site Leadership
 - Wellness Centers
 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee
- Practitioner Leadership
 - Intervention Workgroup
 - Postvention Workgroups

Upstream and Downstream-It's All Important

Culture of Well-Being

Target: Everyone

Stress Management

Target: **Many**

Support Services

Target: **Some**

Crisis Intervention

Target: **Few**

Postvention

Target: Everyone



Contact Information

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Resources

Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Toolkit-<https://www.toolkit.org/>

PAUSD Policies-[Related Policies](#) (BP/AR 5141.52)

Project Safety Net-[PSN](#)

Center for Disease Control Report-[EpiAidReport](#)

UnMasked-[youtubevideo](#)