

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY **SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM**



Creating a Campus Culture of Care



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF
STUDENT LIFE

COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION AND
HUMAN ECOLOGY

GRADUATE
SCHOOL

MILITARY
AND VETERANS
SERVICES



Welcome to The Ohio State University Suicide Prevention Program!

I am so glad you have taken the time to learn more about our program. I encourage you to learn more about what we have accomplished, what ideas and services we offer and how you can get more involved with suicide prevention efforts on campus. Ultimately, the Suicide Prevention Program envisions a campus where everyone supports mental health help-seeking; where students know how – and are willing – to access the available resources; where students, faculty and staff feel comfortable reaching out to others in distress; and where every Buckeye who is in psychological pain recognizes that there are others who care and are willing to help.

As you explore this booklet, you will quickly discover that a partnership model rooted in education, advocacy and outreach is the mission and design of our comprehensive program. We have more than 150 partners working together to help in this important endeavor, which includes national and local community partners, on-campus partners, student leaders, staff and faculty groups and others. They provide resources, research and funding for our work, as well as new opportunities to collaborate, creative ideas and insights. Our partners link us across all Ohio State campuses as well as our Columbus community in ways that would be impossible without their connections to the lives of our students, faculty and staff. Most importantly, their dedication and commitment to our work, offered through their time and energy, demonstrate how strongly they believe that our entire campus and surrounding community must work together to save lives.

I hope that as you learn more about our program you, too, will consider joining us as a supportive partner! Together, we can promote a campus culture of caring where suicide prevention truly becomes a shared campus responsibility.

Sincerely,

Darcy Haag Granello, Ph.D., LPCC-S

Director, Ohio State University Suicide Prevention Program
Professor of Counselor Education



Mission Statement: To develop a comprehensive, effective, culturally responsive, technologically advanced and sustainable system of suicide prevention on all campuses of The Ohio State University.

The Ohio State University Suicide Prevention Program (OSUSPP) aims to engage a campus community of nearly 100,000 students, staff and faculty through education, outreach and advocacy. We are committed to creating a systematic and coordinated effort where suicide prevention is seen as a shared campus responsibility. Our suicide prevention strategies, trainings and initiatives emphasize creating a culture of care that is designed to teach and promote the following philosophical underpinnings:

- Suicide is preventable.
- Stigma reduction is critical to reduce suicide risk and promote a campus culture that encourages mental health help-seeking.
- Suicide prevention and mental health are critical components of student academic and overall success.
- Suicide prevention involves intentional and strategic education, advocacy and outreach designed to prevent suicide by emphasizing good mental health.
- Active and engaged campus partners and a high level of student involvement are essential to program success because suicide prevention is a shared campus responsibility. We work with experts at Ohio State in the **College of Education and Human Ecology**, the **Office of Student Life**, **Military and Veterans Services**, **The Graduate School** and a variety of departments and programs around campus and in the local community.
- Suicide prevention programming should use and contribute to a comprehensive model grounded in empirical research and evidence-based best practices for public health promotion.



OSUSPP recognizes and willingly assumes the responsibility of a leadership role in the development and dissemination of sustainable suicide prevention program practices that are effective for large campuses. We often consult with higher education institutions and professionals about our current research findings on the effectiveness of our suicide prevention gatekeeper trainings, assessment tools and overall evidence-based best practices for creating a comprehensive campus suicide prevention plan. We also appreciate opportunities to collaborate with and learn from the efforts of our fellow colleges and universities.

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Pillars of Our Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program

Effective suicide prevention is comprehensive. It requires a combination of efforts that work together to address different aspects of the problem. In 2019, OSUSPP developed the Pillars of a Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program to serve as a model that outlines ten strategies that form a campus approach to suicide prevention and mental health promotion. Each strategy is a broad goal that can be advanced through an array of possible activities (e.g., programs, policies, practices and services). The Pillars include:

- **Advocacy**
- **Partnerships**
- **Screening**
- **Policy**
- **Infrastructure and Staffing**
- **Education**
- **Leadership**
- **Marketing**
- **Opportunities for Collaboration**
- **Student Leadership Development**

Advocacy

We create opportunities to advocate for and raise awareness about the need to have open, supportive and helpful conversations about suicide and mental health inclusion. Stigma and other social barriers are some of the strongest obstacles that prevent people from acknowledging their distress and seeking care.

We seek to cultivate deep cultural change around these difficult topics by modeling “we can talk about this here” and also by sharing stories of hope and recovery. We are actively involved in large scale anti-stigma campaigns.

Our intent is to work with the entire campus community, including students, faculty and staff. We provide **REACH©** trainings, syllabus language on suicide awareness as well as folders and cards that outline resources and proper responses to those in crisis. We are involved with **RUOK? Day**, The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention **Out of the Darkness Campus Walk**, **Ohio State’s Student Involvement Fair**, **Survivors Luminary** and other collaborations with various departments on campus.

Infrastructure and Staffing

OSUSPP staff consists of a Director, Assistant Director, REACH© Program Coordinator, a total of five doctoral student Graduate Assistants (GA) and one Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), two Federal Work Study students, three undergraduate interns and one military Veteran Community Advocate assigned through Ohio State’s Military and Veterans Services. We have clear operating protocols, job descriptions, expectations of partners, REACH Trainers, etc. and continually re-evaluate our strategies and methodology. We are an independent office on campus, funded through a collaboration of the **Office of Student Life, Military and Veterans Services, The Graduate School, the College of Education and Human Ecology** and other off-campus partners.

We develop manuals and timelines to improve and sustain the functionality and operations of the program so that when personnel changes occur the office continues to run smoothly. There are also clear expectations of all of our volunteers, including our partners and REACH Trainers.. We continually re-evaluate our strategies, methodologies and approaches to our work. We have **Regional REACH© Coordinators (RRC)** at most of our regional campuses who act as liaisons to the Columbus campus for trainings and the growth of suicide prevention efforts. In addition, we have a formalized undergraduate internship program that accepts three students in the fall and three in the spring.

Partnerships

This is the heart of our program – we cannot do our work without our partners! They are the eyes and ears of our campus, alerting us to new possibilities and opportunities and keeping us linked to the entire university. They help us stay aware of trends and risks. Our partners give us access to constituents, writing suicide prevention into their standard operating procedures and job descriptions.

On-Campus Partnerships

In addition to our funding partners, OSUSPP has continued partnerships with more than 150 on-campus groups including Student Life departments of **Residence Life, Student Health Services, Counseling and Consultation Service** and **Student Advocacy**, as well as **Ohio State’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP), First Year Experience (FYE), Honors and Scholars, Second-year Transformational Experience Program (STEP)**, the **College of Veterinary Medicine, Moritz College of Law** among others. Many of these partnerships are intentionally selected due to their service to groups identified as high risk.

OSUSPP has established **REACH© Coordinators** at four of our five Ohio State regional campuses. The coordinators are trained to facilitate REACH© trainings. They also work with OSUSPP to create their own team of REACH© Trainers and to implement suicide prevention efforts similar to those on the Columbus campus.

Off-Campus Community Partnerships

We have established partnerships with organizations such as:

- **Local** – **Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Franklin County Suicide Prevention Coalition, Franklin County LOSS**
- **State** – **Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation, The Suicide Prevention Plan for Ohio** (statewide effort with diverse stakeholders with the support of Ohio Governor Mike DeWine), **The Ohio Department of Veterans Services**
- **National** – **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, National Crisis Text Line, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Education

The Ohio State University Suicide Prevention Program believes anyone can help prevent suicide by learning the risks, warning signs and how to intervene. Our signature program, REACH©, is a 90-minute suicide prevention gatekeeper training program offered to university and student affiliated organizations, departments, colleges and programs throughout the fall, winter and summer semesters.

REACH© is designed to help the Ohio State community prevent suicide by teaching faculty, staff and students how to:

- R**ecognize warning signs
- E**ngage with empathy
- A**sk directly about suicide
- C**ommunicate hope
- H**elp suicidal individuals to access care and treatment

More than 55 faculty/staff/graduate/professional students and 40 undergraduate students, who represent a diverse cross section of student and academic life, are trained and/or recertified each year by OSUSPP to facilitate REACH© Trainings. In addition, groups known to have a higher risk for suicide are targeted for specialized gatekeeper training. These groups include international students, veterans, medical students, engineering students, veterinary students, among others.

Participants who complete the training receive a certificate and pin and join a family of over 22,000+ gatekeepers who have been trained. In the summer of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, OSUSPP developed Reach Out: An Education & Advocacy Session for Suicide Prevention. Reach Out is a virtual synchronous learning experience delivered through Zoom intended to provide basic information about how to prevent suicide to Ohio State staff, faculty and students.

Opportunities for Collaboration

OSUSPP believes in maintaining an overall program attitude that is open to growth, new directions, setting and revising goals and building relationships. Although our program exists to direct and lead the suicide prevention efforts on our campus, we also believe that every student, staff and faculty member can commit to taking responsibility for saving lives in ways that are meaningful to them. This necessitates that OSUSPP maintain flexibility in order to respond to new opportunities that arise for education, advocacy and outreach, oftentimes suggested by partners. We are always creatively evolving our initiatives to meet the needs of students, staff and faculty while also remaining rooted in the best, evidence-based practices.

Awards and Recognition

1. The Ohio State University was an inaugural recipient of the JedCampus Seal for health promotion and suicide prevention programming (2013).
2. Everyone Counts: Suicide Prevention Challenge through the University of Kentucky, recognized for most trainings conducted on a campus (2015–2016).
3. Chosen for Ohio State Digital Flagship Suicide Prevention/Mental Health project to design a cell phone app with Apple.



Screening

RUOK? Buckeyes and **RUOK? Veterans**, mental health screening and referral programs, offer anonymous, online outreach to students in distress. We collaborate with graduate and professional departments and Military and Veterans Services to provide a brief, confidential screening questionnaire, followed by contact from a licensed counselor. The goal is to provide supportive resources and help those in distress make their way to counseling.

- The RUOK? groups reach out directly to a large pool of both graduate and veteran students inviting them to take part in the screening. We partner with The Ohio State University Graduate School and Military and Veterans Services in these efforts.



Leadership

The Ohio State University was among the inaugural institutions to receive the JedCampus seal for our comprehensive mental health promotion and suicide prevention programming. We continue to believe that we have a responsibility to be local, state and national leaders in campus suicide prevention. This includes using and contributing to empirical research and ongoing assessment of our program and initiatives. This often includes engaging with media, both on and off campus, on issues related to prevention best practices and encouraging reporters to follow national recommendations on positive messaging and best practices in reporting on suicide loss. We often consult with state legislatures, policy makers and government agencies as requested. We regularly present at local and national mental health related conferences, often in collaboration with our on-campus partners. We work with the university's Center for the Study of Student Life to assess the effectiveness of REACH[©] and train and license other colleges and universities to implement REACH[©] on their campuses.

Recently, the Jed Foundation (JED) shared the following statement about OSUSPP, which underscores our commitment to being a leading example for others in how to create a campus culture of care:

“OSU definitely has the most well-resourced program with dedicated staff of any university-based suicide prevention program that we know of! Part of the value of the OSU Suicide Prevention Program is the immense and impressive degree of collaboration and robust diversity of offerings that are part of your portfolio, which is not only a testament to the hard work of your team but to the dedication of your broader campus community as well.”



Student Leadership Development

OSUSPP believes that students are extremely integral to advancing the mission of suicide prevention on a college/university campus. We have developed a variety of ways for undergraduate students to work closely with our program staff to use their campus life experiences and voices to help inform and lead many of our prevention efforts. We also know that using a peer to peer model of education for suicide prevention can be largely effective at motivating students to reach out to each other and create a campus culture of care.

Buckeye Campaign Against Suicide (BCAS)

OSUSPP advises BCAS, a registered campus student organization focused on advocacy, that aims to start the conversation most people are afraid to have around mental health and suicide. Students in this open group meet weekly and are committed to erasing the stigma surrounding suicide prevention and mental health. BCAS members host the well-known annual RUOK? Day event, Survivor's Luminary Event, Semi-Colon Project and collaborate on other mental health related outreach and anti-stigma events and campaigns.

Peers REACHing Out (PROs)

PROs, a professional student cohort of the Suicide Prevention Program, focuses on suicide prevention gatekeeper education. Students accepted to be a PRO undergo an intensive semester-long training that prepares them to facilitate REACH© trainings for undergraduate students, becoming knowledgeable, effective and professional advocates for suicide prevention among their peers.

OSUSPP Undergraduate Internship Program

Interns selected to join the OSUSPP team for a semester develop skills in mental health advocacy, professionalism, leadership and administration directly related to mental health stigma reduction and suicide prevention. Students are encouraged to integrate their internship experiences into their academics, research interests and career goals. The application process begins in early spring semester.

Ohio State's Honors and Scholars Semester of Service Program

We also provide mentorship to approximately 3–6 Honors and Scholars students who “intern” with OSUSPP for the spring semester. These students learn about suicide prevention while simultaneously working on a particular chosen project with guidance from OSUSPP aimed at advancing the work of our program.

Policy

To be effective, suicide prevention needs to be a campus (and even community) wide effort. It is important that OSUSPP has a voice in all major university decisions that impact mental wellbeing and to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners to implement and maintain those decisions.

We have:

- Collaborated with campus emergency personnel to help write, maintain and update university policies and standard operating procedures around mental suicide prevention and post-vention efforts, such as developing a university withdrawal/re-enrollment process for students managing mental health concerns
- Collaborated with the campus faculty network and university communications to create a syllabus statement that reinforces mental health help seeking in the classroom, as well as crisis response resources that help staff and faculty know to have a conversation with a potentially distressed student
- Worked with the university to create formal consultation agreement processes to use with other universities, including licensing and statement of work documents and financial account management
- Helped develop strategies to create and evaluate campus means restriction (e.g., garages, laboratories) and to implement signage and crisis numbers in parking garages to reduce stigma and increase hope.
- Served on Ohio State's Suicide and Mental Health Task Force and continue to serve on subsequent implementation committees (2018–present)

Marketing

All marketing efforts aim to send a clear and consistent message that

- promotes positive public narrative messaging about suicide
- communicates hope and shares resources
- emphasizes a campus culture of care
- prioritizes outreach, education and advocacy

Our campus partners and their marketing departments have been instrumental in developing messaging and collateral material. We are also intentional about purchasing “swag” items that reflect the mission of our program. Students assist in this effort, but we provide the content and monitor their work to assure quality and professionalism.

Program brochures and print material are rebranded as needed to reflect the most up-to-date work of the program. We also initiate updates regularly to reflect staff and infrastructure changes, REACH[©] Training administration, new and helpful resources and student leadership opportunities.

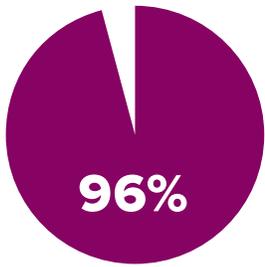
We utilize our social media platforms to share upcoming events, new initiatives, prevention efforts, REACH[©] Training opportunities, updated research and general information about recognizing and responding to signs of distress.

email: suicideprevention@osu.edu To request a REACH Training, please email: reach@osu.edu

website: suicideprevention.osu.edu  [@osureach](https://twitter.com/osureach)  [osureach](https://www.facebook.com/osureach)  [osureach](https://www.instagram.com/osureach)

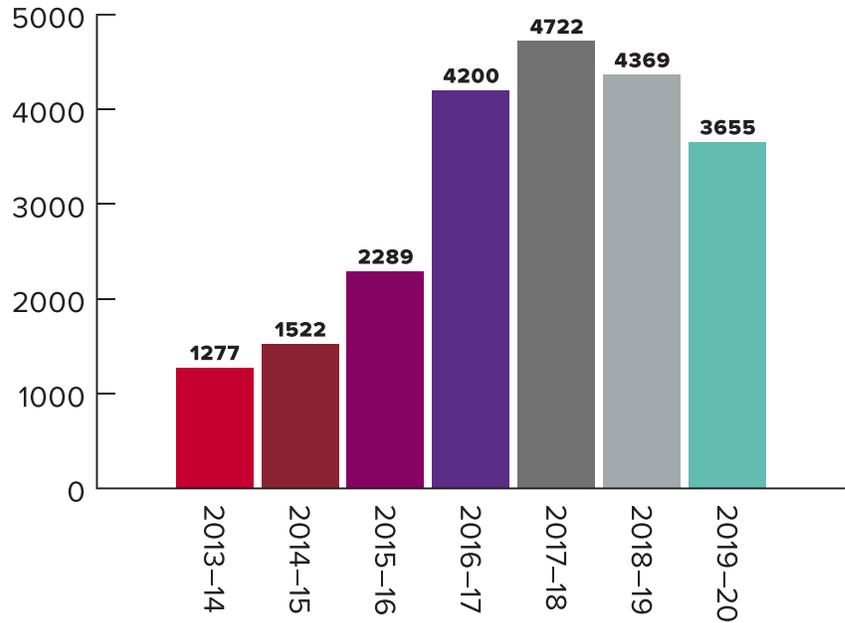
2013

REACH© was created in 2013.

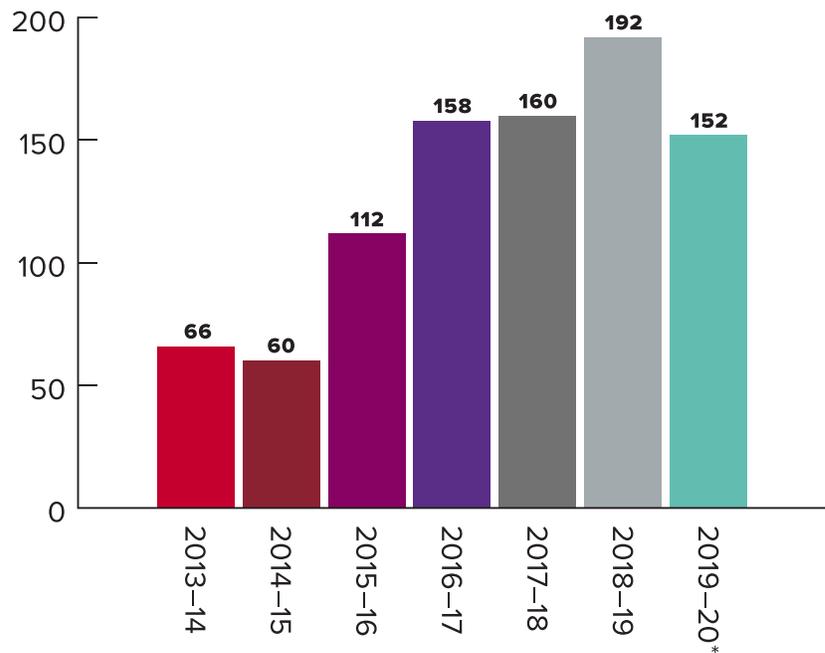


More than 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Communicating Hope and making a Hope-filled Connection with someone in distress is an important part of suicide prevention.

Total Number of **People Trained**



Total Number of **Trainings**



*2019-2020 numbers were impacted by COVID-19 and required training cancellations.



Recognize warning signs: At the completion of training, 95.3% of respondents stated they would be able to recognize risk factors and red flags in those around them.

Empathy: After REACH training, 96% of attendees stated that they are able to use empathy to connect with a person in distress.

Ask about suicide: About 92% of respondents agreed that they would be able to ask a potentially distressed person about suicide after attending a REACH© Suicide Prevention Training.

Communicate hope: 96.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that making a hope-filled connection with someone in distress is an important part of suicide prevention.

Help suicidal individuals access care and treatment: After attending the training, 95% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they know how to use campus mental health resources to help others.

Source: 2018–2019 REACH© Suicide Prevention Program Effectiveness Assessment Survey facilitated by the Center for the Study of Student Life.

Program History and Development

2006



Ohio State University received the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) Garrett Lee Smith grant. This grant allowed Ohio State to begin to develop a comprehensive, collaborative, well-coordinated and evidence-based approach to campus suicide prevention and allowed for hiring an office staff person to begin coordinating those efforts. OSUSPP identified and formed strategic partnerships across campus with a variety of key offices, programs and departments to begin collaborating together to inform initial goals. We began Question, Persuade, and Respond (QPR) suicide prevention trainings, worked toward the identification and treatment of at-risk college students and started the student organization Buckeye Campaign Against Suicide (BCAS).

2009

OSUSPP forms a partnership with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention to use their Interactive Screening Program with Ohio State graduate and professional students. A new GAA is hired to implement this new program called RUOK? Buckeyes.

2012

A partnership is developed between the Office of Student Life and The College of Education and Human Ecology, that is sustained through the use of a partnership model with more than 70 campus and community partners.

2013



REACH© Trainings begin; The JedCampus seal is awarded to Ohio State, in part for having a campus suicide prevention program.

2014

Peers Reaching Out (PROs) facilitate REACH® Gatekeeper Training as a peer-to-peer model of education and to learn to become advocates for suicide prevention.

2016

The program is recognized by Everyone Counts: Suicide Prevention Challenge through the University of Kentucky for having the most suicide prevention trainings conducted on a campus.

2017



First REACH5K held by PROs to recognize the training of over 5,000 people, in an 18-month period; the program manager title became assistant director; partnerships established with The Graduate School and Military and Veterans Services.

2018

Undergraduate internship program begins; Ohio State's President commissions the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Task Force which results in the implementation of a number of important recommendations, including:

- A full time REACH© Program Coordinator is hired.
- An additional doctoral Graduate Research Assistant is hired to advance the use of the Interactive Screen Program screening with graduate students.
- Enhanced REACH© trainings are offered across campus.
- Environmental designs are evaluated to advance safety on campus.
- After-hours urgent call line signs are added to all of the 16 campus parking garages along with the addition of more security enhancements.
- Stigma-reduction promotional efforts are developed and coordinated across campus.
- Collaborations with the Digital Flagship result in the development and dissemination of the Ohio State Wellness app for the delivery of digital messages regarding mental health and mental health services.
- A revised crisis response resource is developed and distributed to all faculty and staff.
- A mental health/suicide prevention statement is developed for use on all course syllabi.

A formalized undergraduate semester internship program is established.

OSUSPP begins formalizing consultative relationships with other colleges and universities. Licensing agreements were developed and OSUSPP begins training other campuses and universities on REACH©

2019

The Pillars of a Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Program are developed and a comprehensive campus suicide prevention program is implemented, including REACH®.

2020

Peers REACHing Out (PROs) becomes a professional cohort of OSUSPP and is no longer a student organization.

COVID-19 Pandemic necessitates that OSUSPP creatively consider new virtual training opportunities and outreach and prevention strategies.

Reach Out: An Education and Advocacy Session for Suicide Prevention is developed to help meet the needs of suicide prevention outreach in a virtual environment.

OSUSPP, The Ohio State University Employee Assistance Program, and the Ohio Foundation for Suicide Prevention form a partnership to implement suicide prevention programming for employees at Ohio State.



Contact Us

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Suicide Prevention Program**
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Columbus, OH 43210
614-688-5829

General questions
suicideprevention@osu.edu

REACH[®] questions
reach@osu.edu

REACH Out questions
reachout@osu.edu

For Crisis Help

**Student Life's Counseling
and Consultation Service**
614-292-5766

**24-hour Crisis / Suicide
Prevention Lifeline**
614-221-5445 / 800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line
Text 4HOPE to 741741

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