

# Staff Instructions and Classroom Announcement Scripts

## Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program

### STAFF INSTRUCTIONS

- Please read this script to your first hour class. We realize how difficult this may be, but it is important to provide accurate information to students.
- Please only express known facts and do not speculate or share your personal opinion about why the death occurred.
- Contact the counselor's office at (xxx)-xxx-xxxx if you would like support in your classroom, either with reading the announcement or in the discussion afterward.
- Plan for this message to have an immediate impact and allow your students time to process this information either by sharing a memory or in a brief discussion without allowing extensive negativity or sadness. Carefully observe students for signs of distress and, following the prearranged protocols, send them to the counselor if they continue to struggle.
- Be aware of information related to youth and suicide. [Here](#) is a resource that can help.
- Tell students they will have the opportunity in the next few days to share memories and stories and to participate in activities constructively. Discourage students from creating permanent memorials as these may glorify suicide and put vulnerable students at risk.
- Everyone grieves differently. Be aware of youth signs for grieving, which may include sadness, withdrawal, irritability, anger, and even stillness. Show empathy and tolerance and help them express these emotions appropriately through writing, talking, painting, etc. Refer them to school mental health when needed and be aware that these emotions may continue for several months. For more guidance on helping children and adolescents grieve, take a look at [this website](#).
- Please read the following to your first hour class:

## CLASSROOM ANNOUNCEMENT SCRIPTS

### High School

"This morning we heard the extremely sad news that (student/staff name) died last night. (Student/staff name) was a (freshman, sophomore ...or teacher, etc.) and [played on the (sports) team, was a member of... taught biology, e.g.] Currently, we do not officially know the cause of death and we have no information about funeral arrangements. We are all saddened by this news and ask that you keep (first name) and their family in your thoughts today. We are going to have a brief class discussion. If after that, any of you feel that you need support, please ask for a pass to see the counselor or see them on break. We will be following our regular school schedule."

### Jr. High/Middle School

"We need to take some time this morning to talk about something very sad. (Student/staff name), an (8th grader or English teacher, etc.), died last night. Currently, we do not officially know the cause of his death. Death is difficult to deal with even if you didn't know (student/staff) and you might have some emotional reactions to this news. It is important for you to express your feelings about (student/staff name) death, especially sadness. We will take some time now to share a few memories of (student/staff name). There are counselors available all day today to talk to you and help you through this. If you need to talk to a counselor, ask for a pass or see them on break."

### Elementary School

"We need to talk about something very sad this morning. (Student/staff name) died recently. (Student/Staff name) was a (6th grader, 3rd grade teacher, etc.). Right now, we don't know how they died for certain. Death is hard to deal with even if you didn't know (student/staff name) and you might have some sad feelings or other feelings after hearing about this. It is very important for you to tell someone about your feelings. We are going to talk about this for just a little while, but if you need more time after that, there are people ready to listen to you and help you. You can talk with me on break or I can get you to (counselor, admin, office personnel, nurse, etc.)."

The Idaho Youth Suicide Prevention Program is a partnership between the Idaho Department of Education and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The program is funded by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Suicide Prevention Program and the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

This publication was supported by the Grant Number 2 801 OT 009017, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.