

Programs: Sandy Hook Promise “Know the Signs” Violence Prevention Program

Chapter Overview: This brief chapter includes:

- An overview and description of Sandy Hook Promise’s no-cost *Know the Signs* violence prevention programs
- Links to more information about Sandy Hook Promise Programs and how you can bring a *Know the Signs* program to a school or youth organization in your community
- An overview and description of Sandy Hook Promise’s student led SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Clubs. SAVE Promise Clubs provide a vehicle for schools and youth organizations to sustain Sandy Hook Promise’s *Know the Signs* programs to build a culture of looking out for each other and being upstanders.

What are Sandy Hook Promise’s *Know the Signs* Programs?

Sandy Hook Promise trains youth and adults, *at no cost*, in four research-based “*Know the Signs*” programs on how to identify, intervene and get help for individuals *BEFORE* they hurt themselves or others. In addition to our four *Know the Signs* programs, we offer a student lead SAVE Promise Club. The SAVE Promise Club empowers our youth to create positive change within their community by sustaining our programs throughout the years.

For more information on each of SHP’s *Know the Signs* programs, please visit http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs.

- **Say Something:** [Say Something](#) teaches and empowers youth, grades 6– 12, how to recognize signs and signals, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to them self or others and reinforce the need to be an upstander and Say Something to a trusted adult *BEFORE* a tragedy takes place.

In addition to young people, Say Something will benefit educators, administrators, community based organization leaders and parents. By building a culture of looking out for one another and reporting possible threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something, entire communities will become safer and lives will be saved.

Why Say Something? When it comes to violence, suicide and threats, most are known by at least one other individual *before* the incident occurs. In fact, in 4 out of 5 school shootings, the attacker told people of his/her plans ahead of time. Additionally, 70% of people who complete suicide told someone of their plans or gave some type of warning or indication. Imagine how much tragedy could be averted if these individuals said something?

Say Something is a no-cost and easy to implement program. The initial presentation can be delivered in 45 minutes or less and can take place digitally, within the classroom, an assembly, or be led by student ambassadors. Based on availability and location, the presentation can also be delivered in-person by a certified SHP Promise Presenter. If you are interested in bringing Say Something to your school or youth organization, please sign up by visiting: www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringsaysomething. Upon

signing up, you will receive access to the Say Something program, including the presentation, educator's guide and student guide.

- **Start With Hello:** [Start With Hello](#) teaches and empowers youth, grades 2 – 12, how to be more inclusive and connected to one another. Start With Hello works to create connectedness and community, by minimizing social isolation, marginalization and rejection *BEFORE* an individual chooses to hurt them self or others. Why Start With Hello? Social isolation is the overwhelming feeling of being left out, lonely or treated like you are invisible. It is a growing epidemic in the United States and within our schools. Young people who are isolated can become victims of bullying, violence and/or depression. As a result, many further pull away from society, struggle with learning and social development and/or choose to hurt themselves or others. SWH is an evidence-informed program developed in collaboration with educators and leading violence prevention researchers. The initial presentation can be self-led by an educator, adult or youth leaders or based on availability and location, the presentation can be delivered in-person by a certified SHP Promise Presenter.

If you are interested in bringing Start With Hello to your school or youth organization, please sign up by visiting: www.sandyhookpromise.org/bringstartwithhello Upon signing up, you will receive access to the Start With Hello program, including the presentation, educator's guide, parent guide and student guide.

- **Signs of Suicide:** At its core, the [Signs of Suicide Prevention Program](#) (SOS) relies on three easy-to-remember steps, denoted by the acronym ACT:
 - **Acknowledge** that you are seeing warning signs and that it is serious
 - **Care** let your friend know how much you care about them
 - **Tell** a trusted adult that you are worried about your friend

SOS uses an educational curriculum to teach students to recognize the symptoms of depression and suicide, and can be implemented by existing school personnel within one class period. The main teaching tool is a video that shows dramatizations and real life stories of hope about the right and wrong ways to react when a friend exhibits certain behaviors. The SOS program includes a mental health self-assessment that screens every student for depression and suicide. The program also includes training and educational materials for faculty, staff and parents.

Why Signs of Suicide? An enlightened student body means earlier detection and increased help-seeking behavior. Evidence-based suicide prevention programming benefits the entire community. Students and school staff learn critical and potentially life-saving skills, parents are encouraged to advocate for their children's health, and the community becomes more resilient overall.

Research has shown that the SOS Program, which is the only suicide prevention program listed on SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices, has demonstrated an improvement in students' knowledge and adaptive attitudes about suicide risk and depression, improves students' knowledge and reduces actual suicide attempts by 40%-64% in randomized controlled studies (Aseltine et al., 2007 & Schilling et al., 2016).

If you are interested in bringing Signs of Suicide to your school or youth organization, please contact us at: programs@sandyhookpromise.org.

- **Safety Assessment & Intervention:** [Safety Assessment & Intervention](#) (SAI) teaches multi-disciplinary teams within a school district how to identify, assess and respond to threats of violence or at-risk behavior *BEFORE* a tragedy takes place.

Why SAI? SAI not only addresses the threat itself, but also helps identify and treat the underlying problem in the youth's life that led him/her to make the threat.

Safety Assessment & Intervention offers a problem-solving, structured approach to evaluate the viability of incoming threats and equips teams to intervene based on the degree of the threat, sign or signal level.

SAI was developed by Dr. Dewey Cornell at the University of Virginia and is an evidence-based program. SHP has partnered to help scale and deliver SAI to schools and youth organizations. Training is delivered in-person only.

SAI is a full day (8 hour) training offered to multi-disciplinary or school safety teams made up of administrators, school social workers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, school resource offices and school health/wellness staff. The training is not intended for educators.

If you are interested in bringing a SA&I training to your school district, Sandy Hook Promise will work with you to identify a champion within your school district to select and assemble the multi-disciplinary teams, training logistics and implementation expectations and processes. If you are interested in bringing SAI to a school district in your community, please email us at programs@sandyhookpromise.org.

What are schools saying about Sandy Hook Promise's Know the Signs Programs?

Schools and youth organizations across the country have implemented and sustained Sandy Hook Promise's *Know the Signs* programs with positive and life-saving results. We've included a few testimonies that speak to how our *Know the Signs* programs are preventing violence *BEFORE* it happens. Sandy Hook Promise's *Know the Signs* programs are making a difference in schools across the country:

- "We have had three incidents since training ... the ability to isolate a situation, facilitate, and communicate ... has made a big difference." ~ Kevin D. Olds, Principal, Otsego Junior High School, Tontogany OH
- Steel Canyon High School, a charter school in the Spring Valley region of San Diego with more than 2,000 students, had just received recognition for embracing the Sandy Hook Promise Say Something program when its efforts were put to the test.

The school had initiated a safety program about three years ago and had established Safe School Ambassadors. It expanded the safety efforts through the Say Something program and had won an excellence award from SHP for its work in training students about how to alert a trusted adult if someone is showing signs of harming themselves or others.

Just a few short weeks later, a student posted a threatening message on Snapchat that also showed a gun.

"We were feeling very good about ourselves and the work we did only to have this situation arise," said School Assistant Principal Paul Battle, who is in charge of safety issues for the campus.

But what happened next heartened Battle. Within just a few minutes, students alerted the school to the threat and police were notified. In fact, more than 300 individuals came forward to notify school officials and the threat was resolved without incident.

"You never reach a point where it's completely safe," said Battle. "It's always about staying focused and looking for those signs. Say Something is really the heartbeat of our safety culture." ~ Paul Battle, Principal, Steele Canyon High School, Spring Valley, CA

- "A student made an anonymous tip there was a loaded weapon on campus. The police intervened, found the loaded weapon and made 4 arrests." ~ Counselor at Miami-Dade Public School
- For Christine Miller, a counselor at Broadview Middle School in Danbury, CT, the work that Sandy Hook Promise does to prevent gun violence is very personal to her. Her son was a fourth grader at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown on 12/14/12 when

a gunman opened fire. Her son survived the shooting and now the family is dedicated to helping students feel empowered to stop further violence.

Miller is part of the team that introduced Sandy Hook Promise's *Say Something* program three years ago to the Danbury school district including to her middle school students. Now she says, a culture of caring and concern has enveloped the school. Students have learned how to tell a trusted adult if they see any signs that someone might hurt themselves or others. There are school assemblies about the program and posters fill the halls. The morning announcements remind students to tell a trusted adult about any concerns they have about their safety or the safety of others.

"The best part about the program is that they make sense to the kids," said Miller.

School personnel from a special cafeteria worker -- who students named to be their trusted adult -- to administrators have embraced the programs, she said.

"I really think that Say Something is building relationships between kids and adults. Kids totally understand that it is about being safe and also about caring," said Miller.

Miller said students have talked with their designated trusted adult about their concerns about students who have exhibited signs of depression or who are signaling on social media that they are going through a hard time. By telling adults, the students have prevented several students from hurting themselves, she said.

"The programs have made us closer, brought our school closer together, like a family," Miller said.

Broadview is now looking to expand on its SHP programs and host information sessions for about what it means to be a trusted adult.

When she was first approached about bringing the program to Danbury, Miller said she was worried about the memories it would bring up about that December day in Newtown. But, she said, the programs have helped her, her son, and her students feel empowered.

"Every one of these tragedies impacts people in ripples. It ripples out. It made me think about that and the healing can come from people getting involved and making a difference," said Miller. ~ Christine Miller, Counselor at Broadview Middle School, Danbury, CT

- "A student reported that a friend posted that she wanted to end her life – she took it seriously and we were able to help. Thanks SHP!" ~ Counselor at High School in Texas

SAVE Promise Clubs:

SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere) Promise Clubs are a place for young people across the country to show their leadership, creativity and passion for protecting their friends, schools and communities from violence *BEFORE* it happens. SAVE Promise Clubs are established and led by students, and are a powerful approach to preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) because they recognize the unique role young people play in making their schools and communities safer.

A SAVE Promise Club can be a stand-alone club or embedded into an existing club, such as SADD, Student Council, FCCLA, or another student leadership, civic or kindness club. SAVE Promise Clubs are successful meeting only once or twice a month and organizing 4 activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in bringing a SAVE Promise Club to your school or youth organization community, please visit: www.sandyhookpromise.org/savepromiseclub for more information.

Building Awareness:

Chapter Overview: This brief chapter includes:

- Ideas on how to share Sandy Hook Promise and our unique mission to prevent gun violence *BEFORE* it happens within your community and ways to encourage your family members, friends, colleagues and community to become involved with Sandy Hook Promise.
- Links to more information, tools and resources to host your own Sandy Hook Promise event or gathering.

What is a Promise Leader Awareness Building Activity and How Does it Help Sandy Hook Promise?

An awareness building activity could be any type of activity, gathering or event that you are part of with the purpose of sharing Sandy Hook Promise's unique approach to preventing gun violence *BEFORE* it happens with others in your community. The goal of your awareness building activity is to help educate others about Sandy Hook Promise and provide opportunities for them to join you in preventing gun violence, and other forms of violence and victimization, *BEFORE* they take place. Awareness building can take place online, by tapping into your local media, or in-person in your place of work, school, home or community. Through building awareness, you are helping empower others in your community to *Know the Signs* and to take action to prevent gun violence in your community.

What are some examples of a Sandy Hook Promise "building awareness" activity?

- **Letter to the Editor** Writing a letter to the editor is a great opportunity to spread the word about Sandy Hook Promise. A letter to the editor is a powerful tool to make others in your community aware of Sandy Hook Promise's advocacy or policy initiatives, *Know*

the Signs programs, or tell your story and motivate and inspire others to action. Editors prefer to publish timely, concise letters that respond to an article, editorial, or other letter that appeared in the newspaper and letters on issues of local importance and interest. To increase your chances of getting published, please reference your newspapers guidelines (word count, etc.) and submit your letter as quickly as possible, preferably on the same day that the article runs.

Click this link to get started on writing your [Letter to the Editor](#). From here, you will be provided with a letter template and instructions and tips for success on your letter getting published.

- **Hosting a table** Community events are a great place to share Sandy Hook Promise's mission and message. Any event where you are able to set up a table and display Sandy Hook Promise materials will work, this could include a school resource fair, a table after your worship service or a community event. SHP materials are available through digital downloads for you to print the quantity you need.

To get started in planning your tabling event, please reach out to us at promiseleader@sandyhookpromise.org and we can assist you in organizing your materials and help you feel confident in speaking about the four no cost *Know the Signs* prevention programs.

- **[Outreach to a school or youth organization](#)** Introducing our four no cost *Know the Signs* prevention programs to your local school or youth organization is a great way to help train and empower more people in your community. Your school or youth organization outreach can be done through a phone call, email or a personal meeting with a school counselor, educator or principal. Reaching out to your school administrators or teachers to educate them on the importance of Sandy Hook Promise's *Know the Signs* programs will help bring training to more students and will help create safer communities and save lives!

To get started in planning your outreach communication to a school or youth organization, please contact us at promiseleader@sandyhookpromise.org. We will help you develop a plan, gather materials and provide support throughout your outreach efforts.

- **Promise Leader Conversations** Promise Leaders can play an extremely important role in advancing Sandy Hook Promise's mission and preventing violence *BEFORE* it happens when they move beyond individual action to collective action. By having a conversation with those you know and trust, you allow your network to break through their feelings of helplessness and hopelessness and join hundreds of thousands of people from across the country who are taking seemingly simple, yet powerful steps to prevent gun violence before it happens. We encourage you to think creatively; your conversation

could be held over morning coffee, a brown bag or pizza lunch with your co-workers, part of a dinner or book club, a potluck or a weekend play date.

To get started in planning your conversation, please log onto <http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/conversations> and register your conversation with Sandy Hook Promise. When you log on you will find a free, downloadable planning guide, check-list and sample invitation to help you get started. You can also schedule a call with us and we will help you develop a plan and provide you with support. Email us at promiseleader@sandyhookpromise.org to get started today.

Advocacy:

Chapter Overview: This brief chapter includes:

- An overview and description of how to effectively advocate for Sandy Hook Promise, helping us to pass state and federal laws that will prevent violence before it happens and keep our children and communities safe.
- Whether you are an experienced advocate or getting involved for the first time, this chapter includes ideas and resources that you can use to organize and mobilize your friends, family, and community to making the changes we all want to see.

Why is being an advocate on behalf of Sandy Hook Promise important?

As a Promise Leader and a concerned citizen, your voice is so important. Together our efforts will change policy and save lives! Since Sandy Hook Promise was founded, we have been working to pass commonsense laws that improve access to mental health care, make our schools safer, and keep guns out of dangerous hands. While progress can feel slow, we are making great strides and we need your help!

What policies are Sandy Hook Promise supporting?

- **School Safety & Youth Violence Prevention** Students face too much violence every year, from bullying and homicide, to rising rates of young suicides. We know that in a majority of these violence cases, youth display warning signs or signals before taking any action to hurt themselves or others. Unfortunately, those who observe these signs or signals do not always recognize what they are seeing or do not report what they observed. That's why early identification and intervention programs are so important to improving the safety of our students and schools.

Sandy Hook Promise has worked with bipartisan champions to introduce the STOP School Violence Act to provide \$50 million in annual grants to states to help our schools implement proven violence prevention programs that stop violence before it happens.

- **Gun Violence Restraining Orders** In the aftermath of a shooting incident, we often hear stories from friends or family members about the warning signs the shooter exhibited. If

a family is concerned that a loved one poses a risk to themselves or others, but a crime has not yet been committed, there is little they can do to protect their loved one or the public. Gun Violence Restraining Orders allow family and friends to intervene and ask law enforcement to temporarily separate an individual who is at risk of hurting themselves or others from buying or possessing firearms.

Sandy Hook Promise supports legislation that would enable family or friends to alert law enforcement to a potentially dangerous situation and give law enforcement the tools and authority they need to remove firearms in the interest of public safety.

- **Background Checks** Sandy Hook Promise strongly supports the right of law-abiding individuals to keep and bear arms, but also believes that firearms should be kept out of the hands of the severely mentally ill and individuals who pose a risk to themselves or others. Federal law requires that a background check take place for every gun sale made by a federal firearms licensee. But so-called “private sales,” both online and at some gun shows, can skirt a background check, allowing guns to land into the hands of criminals and the mentally ill.

Sandy Hook Promise supports legislation that expands the requirement for background checks. With a few common-sense exceptions, no gun should be sold in the United States to a buyer without first determining whether he or she is prohibited by law from possessing a firearm.

- **Mental Health & Wellness** While the vast majority of mental illness does not cause violent behavior, sometimes untreated mental illness can result in harm to an individual or a community. Sandy Hook Promise is committed to protect access to mental health care through the Affordable Care Act, and to promote preventive mental health care measures, by supporting new state and federal bills that improve access to care and services. That’s why we worked with our national mental health partners to pass the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016!

What are some examples of how to advocate with Sandy Hook Promise?

- **Letters to the Editor** Writing a letter to the editor is a great opportunity to spread the word about Sandy Hook Promise policy and tell your story about why it is important to you. You can reach a broad audience and often inspire others to take action, too. Editors prefer to publish timely, concise letters that respond to an article, editorial, or other letter that appeared in the newspaper and letters on issues of local importance and interest. To increase your chances of getting published, please visit the newspapers guidelines on submitting a letter to the editor and submit your letter as quickly as possible, preferably on the same day that the article runs.

Click here to get started on writing your [Letter to the Editor](#). From here you will be provided with a letter template and instructions and tips for success on your letter getting published.

- **In-Person Meetings** Meeting with your legislators in person is the most effective way to get your message across. As a Promise Leader, you have a unique ability to spread our Sandy Hook Promise mission and policy priorities by forming relationships with your local, state, and federal elected officials. You do not have to travel all the way to Washington, DC to meet with your federal legislators. Members of Congress return more frequently to their home districts and states to meet with constituents, hold town halls, and open office hours. Call your elected official's office and ask to speak with the scheduler. Be prepared to provide information about yourself and the issue or bill you'd like to discuss.
- **Organizing Party/Event** As we work for change, we must continue to grow our movement of those who want to prevent gun violence. If we want our elected officials to represent our interests, we must ensure that more voices are part of the process. You can help organize friends and neighbors to make calls, write letters, and attend public events with your local leaders to advocate for important policy change from background checks to school safety. Consider hosting a letter writing party or create a sign-up sheet to bring a group of concerned fellow citizens with you to an upcoming congressional town hall. To find a congressional town hall near you, please visit: [Town Hall Project](#)

Fundraising:

Chapter Overview: This brief chapter includes:

- An overview and description of successful ways to raise funds to help Sandy Hook Promise continue our work training students across the country in our no-cost *Know the Signs* violence prevention programs, building critical awareness and advocating on behalf of sensible policy to create safer communities and to help save lives!
- More information and links to tools and resources to host or start your own Sandy Hook Promise event or gathering.

Why is fundraising for Sandy Hook Promise important?

Sandy Hook Promise relies on the generosity of our supporters to continue to bring Sandy Hook Promise's four no-cost *Know the Signs* prevention programs out to schools and youth organizations nationwide. Promise Leader fundraising efforts help sustain our ability to train more students on how to create safer, more connected communities and to save lives!

What are some examples of Sandy Hook Promise fundraising opportunities?

- **Facebook Birthday** Did you know you can host a birthday fundraiser on Facebook where the donations you raise will be sent to Sandy Hook Promise? This is a great way to raise

funds, while at the same time educating your network about Sandy Hook Promise's mission and getting them involved! You can do this by logging in to your personal Facebook page and clicking Fundraisers on the left panel, then Raise Money. Select Nonprofit and search for Sandy Hook Promise, and from here you can insert a personal message or use the one provided.

- **Online/At Home Fundraising Events** There are a multitude of ways to raise funds through at home/online fundraising parties and social media campaigns, Do you know someone who sells Pampered Chef? Mary Kay? Rodan & Fields? Stella & Dot, etc? Ask if they are willing to donate a portion of the sales to Sandy Hook Promise. This is a great opportunity to bring your friends and personal network together, while at the same time, sharing information about Sandy Hook Promise and making them aware of your role as a Promise Leader.
- **Lemonade Sales/Bake Sales/Garage Sales.** These tried and true ways to raise money still work! Ask your kids to help out and lead the charge in helping to create safer communities and to save lives. Include a brochure about Sandy Hook Promise that people can take with them to learn more about our unique approach to preventing gun violence *BEFORE* it takes place.
- **Company Match** Reach out to your Human Resources department to see if your company will match any monies raised from your charitable donations or fundraisers. Each company will set their own rules, so be sure to ask for a set of guidelines before you plan to make your donation or fundraising event.
- **Volunteer Grant Program** Reach out to your Human Resources Department to inquire whether they offer a Volunteer Grant Program. This program is offered by some companies and the company will pay the nonprofit for the volunteer hours an employee works. This is an extra bonus for Sandy Hook Promise! Not only do we benefit from your generous volunteer hours, we also get paid for it.

To get started on any of the Promise Leader fundraising ideas mentioned in this toolkit, please reach out to promiseleader@sandyhookpromise.org.