WHAT IS SAY SOMETHING?

Say Something teaches youth and teens, grades 6-12, how to recognize signs & signals - especially on social media - from individuals who may want to hurt themselves or others and to “Say Something” to a trusted adult to get them help. Students and their peers are actively involved in social media, frequently on multiple platforms. They are often the first to see a threatening or worrisome conversation, post or picture. Say Something teaches them what signs to look for and teaches strategies to ensure they take action and tell a trusted adult.

Say Something teaches youth and teens, along with educators, parents and community leaders, to:

1. **Look for warning signs, signals and threats.**
2. **Act immediately. Take it seriously.**
3. **Say something to a trusted adult.**

As a community organization, you know that interactions between young adults are not something that only takes place in schools. Students gather at libraries, after school settings, clubs, sporting practice and events and community centers. By providing this guide, we aim to continue the conversation beyond school to reach youth and connect with them where they are.
WHY SAY SOMETHING?

Over the last 25 years, research has revealed that in most acts of gun violence, at least one friend was told that an act of violence would be committed or may take place. In one study, it was reported that in 4 out of 5 school shootings, the attacker had told people of his plans ahead of time. Additionally, 7 out of 10 people who complete suicide tell someone their plans or give some other warning sign. Imagine if one of those people took action. How many tragedies could be prevented? How many lives would be saved? The problem is that no one is taking action with this information to stop the act of violence before it starts.

We want to help build a culture of "looking out for one another" and reporting possible threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something (especially within social media). We can all play a role in helping to create healthier, safer schools and communities.

In 4 out of 5 shootings, the attacker told other people of his plans ahead of time.

70% of people who complete suicide tell someone of their plans or give warning signs.

7% of students in grades 9-12 reported not going to school 1 or more days in the previous 30 days because they felt unsafe.
Community Leaders Play an Important Role

Community organizations play an important role in youth development and supporting youth and teens through pivotal stages in life.

- Community leaders support the healthy development and growth of children.
- Children learn important leadership skills and build character in after school programs, enrichment programs, extracurricular activities and sports.
- Community leaders are oftentimes role models in the community.

This is why it is important to bring Say Something to community spaces where youth engage and connect with others in positive ways.
how COMMUNITY LEADERS & ORGANIZATIONS can help
**Make Say Something part of your organizational culture**
- Include the lessons from Say Something in your organizational charter or principles.

**Talk to leaders and participants about warning signs, signals and threats**
- Share what warning signs, signals and threats might look like as well as any experience you feel comfortable sharing and ask your members to do the same.

**Model best practices**
- Think about your group’s social media pages and your presence online. Create secure community spaces online.
- Make sure to display good digital citizenship and demonstrate how you care for others in person and online.

**Build your digital literacy skills**
- Become familiar with reporting features on popular social media sites that allow you to report threatening or worrisome behavior. Learn about steps you can take to get help and share them with the groups of children you work with. Ask participants to share their expertise and knowledge on this matter.

**Discuss the difference between saying something and telling on someone**
- Explain that telling on someone is purposely trying to get someone in trouble but saying something is getting someone help.

**Share your story**
- Tell your members a story about a time that you took action and it made a difference. What happened? How did you feel afterwards?

**Be a trusted adult**
- Being a trusted adult means taking action and communicating with family, school staff, law enforcement and trained mental health professionals to get help for someone in need.
- Become familiar with emergency procedures and contacts for local law enforcement and school staff.
- Remind your members that you are always there for them if they need someone to talk to. Encourage them to reach out if they see a warning sign, signal or threat.
Warning signs
are thoughts, feelings and behaviors that indicate a significant change. General warning signs can include: significant personality change, withdrawal from others, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities (e.g. sports/clubs), low school interest, low tolerance for frustration, poor coping skills, lack of resiliency, can't come to terms with rejection, will not forget or forgive those wrongs of people, blames others for own failures, negative role models, dehumanizes others, excessive feelings of isolation or rejection, hopelessness, marked changes in patterns of eating and/or sleeping, excessive crying/sadness, dramatic change in physical appearance, extreme mood changes, excessive anger, violent thoughts and/or aggressive behavior, impulsive and chronic intimidating, bullying and/or hitting, thoughts or plans of harming self or others and/or fear of riding the bus/going to school.

Signals
are gestures or actions that transmit information which can be either overt or vague in nature. Some common signals may include: giving away prized possessions, rigid beliefs/ideologies, weaponry fascination and/or fascination with and writings/drawings on death, dying or gruesome events including past school shootings/mass murderers, attempts to recruit someone to join the attack, warning a friend to stay away from school on a certain day, bragging about the upcoming attack and/or bragging about access to weapons.
A threat
is any communication (in person or online/written) which has the intent to harm someone. Threats can be made directly to an intended victim or to third parties. Some common threats may include: a student comments favorably on a school shooting stating that "Somebody should do that here," "Life isn't worth living," "Someone should blow this place up," "I am going to beat her to a pulp," "You'd be better off without me."

Social media is a primary source of signs, signals and threats followed by hallway, lunchroom and classroom.

2 HOW TO SAY “SAY SOMETHING” (ACT IMMEDIATELY)

Gather any texts, photos, videos, social media posts or other communication of warning signs, signals or threats. If all or portions were spoken, then take notes and write down what you heard.

Act immediately and contact your trusted adult and state:

• "I must talk to you about (name the individual)".
• "S/he has made (or has been making) threats."
• "I am noticing warning signs and signals" ... and "I need your help now to get him / her help and assistance."
• Explain what you observed, when you observed it and pass along communication and notes.
• Share where the individual can be found or where you last saw them, his or her contact information and parents' names / contact information (if known).
• Ask your trusted adult to update you once actions have been taken.

Why It Is better to be an "upstander" rather than a "bystander".

A bystander passively observes but does nothing. An upstander observes and takes action. When you act, you could save someone's life or the lives of others. When you do not act out of fear, you risk losing a friend or classmate. Individuals want to be helped - they may not understand that they need it or don't know how to get it.

There is a difference between getting someone in trouble vs. getting them help.

When you act and "Say Something", you are getting someone help for their own safety and well-being and to protect yourself and others from harm. You want to help them. When you are telling on, ratting on or betraying someone, you are purposely trying to get them in trouble for your own gain. You want to get them in trouble.

Make a personal pledge to 'Say Something'.

A pledge card is available for everyone to read, identify a trusted adult and sign. By making the pledge you promise to look out for warning signs, act immediately and say something to a trusted adult. Remember to keep it on you at all times and/or take a picture of it and store it on your phone.
3  SAY SOMETHING

*If we teach YOUTH how to:*

1. Recognize warning signs, signals & threats.
2. Act immediately. Take it seriously.
3. “Say Something” to a trusted adult.

*Our Community will get better at:*

1. Reducing violence, threats and tragic consequences.
2. Creating safer, healthier communities.

*How can community organizations use Say Something resources?*

- Organize a Community Event. Present the Say Something presentation and lead a discussion with children, young adults and their families.
- Invite speakers, such as law enforcement, first responders, health care professionals and others who can share firsthand about the importance of Say Something, to come and talk with youth and families.
- Tie Say Something into holidays, key community events and community newsletters.
- Host a Say Something poster making or video contest at your center.
TWO SIMPLE words with POWER to SAVE LIVES

SAY SOMETHING
BUILD COMMUNITY AND CONNECTEDNESS

Most organizations have guidelines to help create a positive, healthy environment for youth. Involving youth in meaningful decision-making is key for healthy youth development. Lead a community circle discussion to involve youth in the creation of community principles or guidelines for the group. Youth involvement in the creation of community principles is a positive experience that also increases buy-in and support for shared norms. This process helps build community and connectedness.

Creating Community Principles
Using a community circle format, discuss values that are important in your community.

Procedure:
1. Arrange seats in a circle. Explain that for this discussion, they will sit in a circle that represents how they are connected and encourages them to participate as equals in the discussion. The structure involves a talking piece. This is an object that is passed around to each person when it is their turn to speak. It can be a stuffed animal, book, stress ball, rock etc. You can choose any object or find an object that has special meaning to your group. Explain to everyone that the talking piece is used to indicate whose turn it is to speak. Remind participants that the person with the talking piece has the "mic" and everyone else listens quietly, showing respect for the speaker and the talking piece. Students have the option to pass or to speak later when the talking piece goes around one last time.

2. Distribute an index card to each person. Ask everyone to write one value that is important to them. Once everyone has written a value, each person will read their value and then place it on the ground in the center for all to see. If time allows, ask everyone to also share why that value is important to them.

3. Then, ask youth "What do you see in the center of the circle?" Pass the talking piece to anyone who wants to share their thoughts.

4. Highlight that everyone can make a positive contribution. The group will draw from these values to develop community guidelines.

5. Ask the group "How can we show respect and support for each other?" or "How do we want to treat ourselves and others?" The answers to these questions will be the basis for community guidelines.

6. Extend the concept of community principles/guidelines to an online community. How can the lessons from Say Something be incorporated and promoted through their community guidelines?

7. Write the guidelines on chart paper and display them in a central location to serve as a reminder for the group. Make sure to include a guideline about Say Something.
Youth Leadership and Service

One way to support youth and help them thrive in their teenage years and into adulthood is by promoting civic involvement and engagement whereby youth contribute to their communities through service.

Exploring Identity and Digital Citizenship
Invite participants to share aspects of their identity and personalities both in person and online using art and creative writing. On chart paper, tell students to write their names in a circle at the center of the page. Then, instruct them to write words that describe them, their interests, hobbies, dreams and goals. Have students share their identity brainstorm with a partner. Discuss as a group how they express their identity. What do they share online? What do other youth share online? Explain the concept of digital citizenship and how online communities and interactions also reflect who we are in real life. What are harmful, hurtful behaviors that take place online? What is good digital citizenship? What is acceptable and responsible online behavior? How can we be good friends and caring, kind, thoughtful individuals online? Review the warning signs, signals and threats. Encourage youth to care for each other and learn to recognize warning signs and threats as part of being a good digital citizen. Ask students to reflect on their habits and how they can promote and sustain Say Something online and offline. Then, invite all participants to take the Say Something pledge.

Brainstorm additional ways to promote awareness, spread the message and help your young people become upstanders. You can also learn more about becoming involved with Say Something and starting a Promise Club within your organization.

Youth Empowerment
Involving youth in activities where they identify a need in the community and become a part of the solution is important for healthy youth development. These activities help youth become empathetic, reflective individuals who see themselves as positive agents of change. They also create opportunities for youth leadership.

Taking Action:
Creating an Action Plan and Preparing to Act Immediately
Discuss what prevents youth from acting immediately. In small groups, students can work collaboratively on a plan to overcome barriers to taking action. On chart paper, they can create a problem tree. First they brainstorm the “root” of the problem - what causes inaction. They list these causes around the roots of the tree. Then, they brainstorm solutions to this problem. Each group can present their problem tree. In a group discussion, they can list strategies they will use to ensure they take immediate action and “Say Something” to a trusted adult. Make sure the solutions include identifying trusted adults and how to reach out to “Say Something.”
HOW TO CARRY IT forward
SAY SOMETHING WEEK

• Join hundreds of schools and youth organizations across the country by participating in Sandy Hook Promise’s National Say Something Week. Host your Say Something presentation this week and work with your youth to plan contests, activities and events. To sign up for Say Something Week and access the Say Something Week planning guide, please visit: www.sandyhookpromise.org/saysomethingweek.

CREATING A PROMISE CLUB

• A Promise Club is made up of a designated adult champion(s) and youth leaders. A Promise Club can be embedded into an existing student club or youth organization. Promise Clubs agree to help lead and sustain Sandy Hook Promise’s no-cost, easy to implement violence prevention programs - Say Something and/or Start with Hello. Student leaders play a key leadership role in reinforcing and sustaining these lifesaving programs through a variety of simple, yet powerful activities. For more information about creating a Promise Club, please email programs@sandyhookpromise.org.

PROMOTE SAY SOMETHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

• Ask students to organize and lead a social media campaign, sharing tweets, posts and photos of why they will “Say Something” and ask them to tag your school or organization and #SaySomething.

SPREADING THE WORD

• Send home a letter to parents/caregivers or email parents/caregivers about the Say Something activities happening in your organization. Encourage parents to read the Say Something parent resource guide and talk to their kids about Say Something.

Learn more about other SHP programs at www.sandyhookpromise.org
Take the Pledge
I promise to...

1. Look for warning signs, signals & threats
2. Act immediately. Take it seriously.
3. Say something to a trusted adult

To help create a safer, healthier school
ABOUT SANDY HOOK PROMISE

Sandy Hook Promise exists to stop (gun) violence before it starts. Led by several families who lost a loved one in the Sandy Hook School shooting on December 14, 2012, in which 20 first-graders and 6 educators were killed, we are a national non-profit organization focused on a programmatic approach to violence prevention. We strongly believe that gun violence is preventable – whether the violence is based on self-harm or harm to others – and assert the best way to prevent tragic actions is to identify, intervene and get help for people who may be at-risk. We know that the vast majority of people we are helping will not become violent. While our prevention programs will help that small percentage that can do so much damage, we are also helping many, many other students and children who need assistance.

For more information about Sandy Hook Promise and our other school and community-based prevention programs and training, please visit www.sandyhookpromise.org. Make the Promise and together we can protect children from preventable violence.
SAY SOMETHING

A youth violence prevention program from Sandy Hook PROMISE

SANDYHOOKPROMISE.ORG/SAY SOMETHING