

GIZMO'S PAWESOME GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH CURRICULUM



Description: This is a fun, flexible, turn-key curriculum for elementary youth that introduces the [Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health](#) (Guide) using an animated Power Point of the Guide, implementer discussion guide, and required and optional activities for youth. It may be implemented in various settings, such as public/ private/ parochial/ therapeutic schools, treatment locations, camps, and before or after school programs.

The curriculum strives to help youth, their trusted adults, and the settings in which they live support their mental health and social emotional learning, and create a greater sense of individual and community connectedness thereby strengthening their mental wellness and reducing their risk of many negative health outcomes, but most importantly poor mental health and suicide.

The Guide was developed to respond to a critical youth suicide prevention and mental health promotion education and service gap evidenced by the [Connecticut data](#), and to support youth mental health literacy. Utilizing the evidence-based [Safety Plan](#) (Stanley and Brown, 2012) as the framework, the Guide introduces mental health and wellness knowledge and skills to youth at an early age with the hope that they may keep and apply what they learn for a lifetime to help them stay healthy and safe. These include:

1. What is mental health;
2. Mental health is equally as important as physical health;
3. Daily activities that support mental health wellness;
4. How to identify when mental health needs attention;
5. Internal and external healthy coping strategies that support mental health;
6. How to identify and connect with trusted adults; and
7. Resources to share with trusted adults.

Gizmo, the mascot for the CT suicide prevention campaign- "1 WORD, 1 VOICE, 1 LIFE...Be the 1 to start the conversation," and his fellow therapy dog and K9 First Responder friends use a warm and fuzzy approach to introduce youth to what can be a challenging subject for adults to discuss and for youth to understand. This approach makes the Guide engaging, memorable, and not only easy to use, but fun as well.

Time: The curriculum is made up of 5 segments that may be implemented over a 50 minute period at once, or across multiple days for no more than two consecutive weeks.

Key Recommendations Prior to Curriculum Implementation:

1. Policies, Procedures and Protocols: Site policies, procedures and protocols related to early identification (screening and assessment), referral, connections to care, and follow-up should be updated using state standards, legislation, and national best practice guidance, and should include suicide prevention, intervention and response specifically. Please visit these resource pages for more information relevant to your site type: www.preventsuicidect.org/resources
2. Staff Gatekeeper Training: Because we do not know who youth will identify as their Trusted Adult to go to when they need help, it is crucial that all site staff from support staff (ie. administrative assistants, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, custodians) to administrators (ie. Principals, Directors) and clinicians (ie. Licensed, Certified) are trained at a minimum as Gatekeepers to recognize and respond to youth with mental health needs and who may be also be at risk for suicide. Please visit this resource page for more information on training models available in CT: www.preventsuicidect.org/training

To access training and additional consultation and guidance, please do not hesitate to Contact Us at: www.preventsuicidect.org/contact-us

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Curriculum Kit: The kit is prepared for youth groups of 25 or less. The kit is made up of items that must be mailed, and others that are online - www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/curriculum-sites . Once a site has provided evidence of completed faculty/staff gatekeeper training, they will be granted access to the secured curriculum page.

Provided in Kit via Mail:

1. One full-size copy of *Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health* for implementer use (8.5" x 11")
2. Twenty-five youth copies of the Guide (about 4" x 6")
3. Twenty-five color posters featuring Gizmo and the Mental Health Plan for youth (11" x 17");
4. Twenty-five laminated, reusable Gizmo/Bingo cards and set of call-out cards for optional activity
5. Twenty-five 1" Trusted Adult Lapel Pins
6. Twenty-five Trusted Adult Room/Office Removable Stickers
7. Gizmo Sticker Sheets for Gizmo Bingo Game rewards

Curriculum Materials (Online):

1. Self-Directed Implementer Guidance Slides
2. Self-Directed Implementer Guidance Slides for Printing (Greyscale)
3. Our Trusted Adults Slide (Editable, required slide)
4. Classroom Slides & Videos for Youth Guide Viewing
5. Valentine sheet
6. Check-In Slip
7. Mental Health Plan Check-Up Slip
8. Mental Health Plan Tracking Form
9. Trusted Adult Room/Office Sign
10. Parent Letter Template
11. Administrator Letter Template

Curriculum Materials/Optional Activities:

Gizmo Bingo Game (provided in Kit)

Gizmo's Pawesome Word Searches – Easy to Difficult (online): www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/forkids

Gizmo's Pawesome Dog Games – Easy to Difficult (online): www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/forkids

Gizmo's Puzzles – Easy, medium, difficult (online): www.gizmo4mentalhealth.org/forkids

References:

CT Department of Public Health (2015). CT School Health Survey.
www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/hisr/pdf/cshs_ycb2015_report.pdf

Stanley, B. & Brown, G. K. (2012). Safety Planning Intervention: A Brief Intervention to Mitigate Suicide Risk. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 19, 256-264.
http://suicidesafetyplan.com/uploads/Safety_Planning_-_Cog__Beh_Practice.pdf

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The views, opinions, and content expressed in the Guide and Curriculum do not necessarily reflect the views, opinions, or policies of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Click here to find out more about Gizmo's Pawesome Guide to Mental Health.](#)