


# Community Conversations: Support for Survivors of Suicide

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Special thanks to the Peter  
DeGeorge Family  
Foundation for supporting

COMMUNITY  
CONVERSATIONS

The information contained herein is not therapeutic advice nor a substitute for therapy. It should not be used to diagnose or treat any mental health problem but is for information only and may not be applicable to you and your specific needs. The goal is to provide education about grief and general coping skills. If you are located within the United States and you need emergency assistance please call **911** or go to your **nearest emergency room**. The National Suicide Prevention Line is: **1-800-273-8255**

If you are located within Colorado you may also call the Colorado Crisis Line at **844-493-TALK (8255)**.

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“Grief is not a disorder,  
a disease or a sign of  
weakness. It is an  
emotional, physical, and  
spiritual necessity, the  
price you pay for love.  
The only cure for grief is  
to grieve.” - Earl  
Grollman



**Who are you honoring or holding close to your heart tonight?**

Text your  
vote to  
**(712) 435-1406**



# Presentation Goals:

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Increase comfort around saying the word suicide, and explanation based on age

Basic brain development, and what are impacts for stressors

Identify & explore risk factors & protective factors

Learn and use the acronym ALERT to support suicidal ideations

Ways to navigate support and the changes that can occur.



Avoid	Say
<p>“Committed Suicide</p> <p>“Failed” or “Successful” attempt</p>	<p>“Died by Suicide”</p> <p>“Ended his/her life”</p> <p>“killed himself/herself”</p> <p>“ Suicide attempt” or “ Death by suicide”</p>



Check for your local areas  
specific telephone  
number

Check for your local  
Crisis Support Centers

Colorado Crisis Support:  
**For Colorado Residents Only**  
**(That means you live in Colorado!!!!)**  
Phone: 1-844-493-8255  
Text: "TALK" 38255



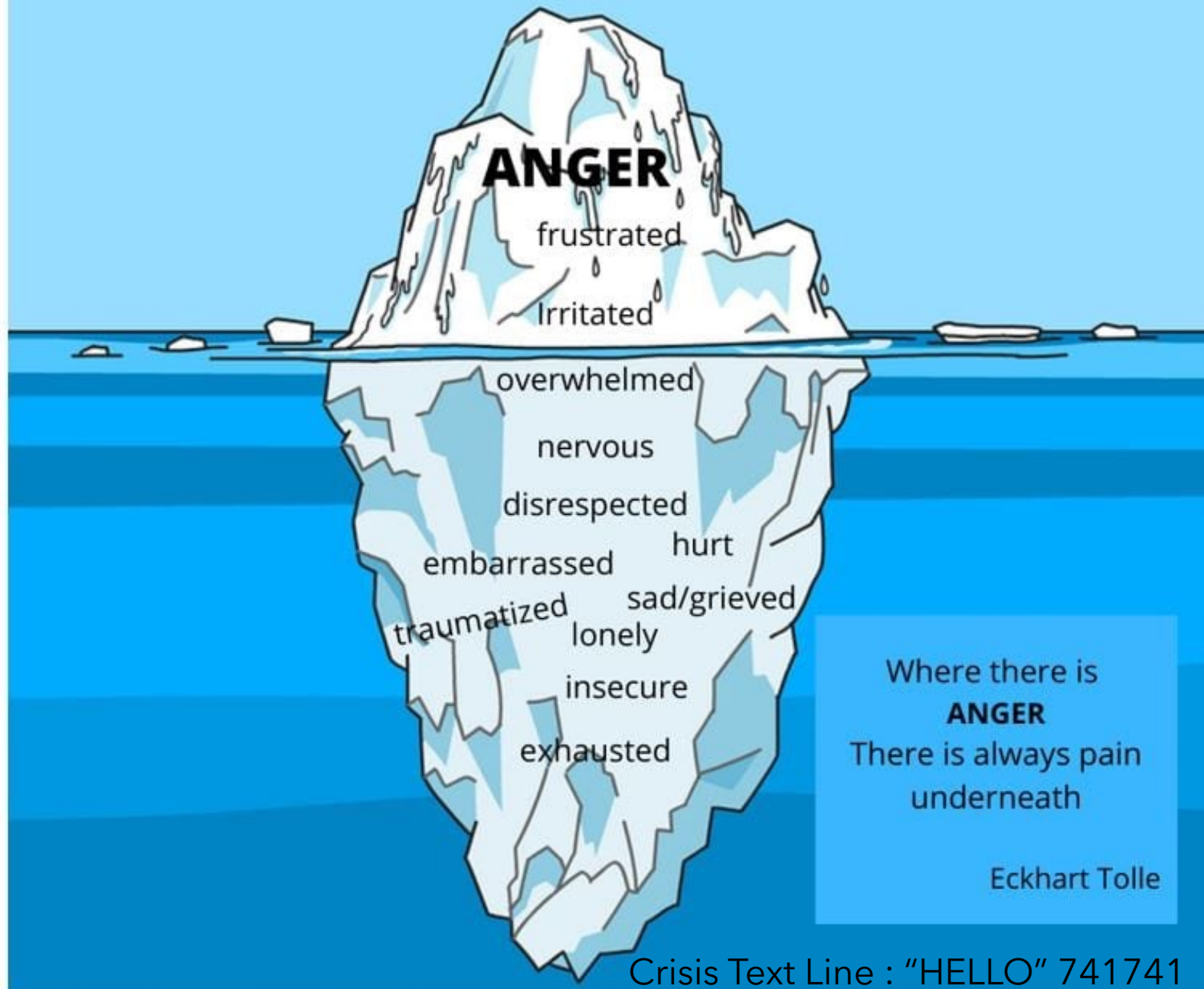
# Let's Talk About the Brain:

Frontal lobe controls cognitive skills:

- Emotional expression
- Problem solving
- Memory
- Language
- Judgement
- Sexual behaviors

On average finishes developing approximately at age 25

## Hidden Emotions



# Let's Talk About the Brain:

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Adolescent Brain: Frame work

Adult Brain: Is like a house with drywall.



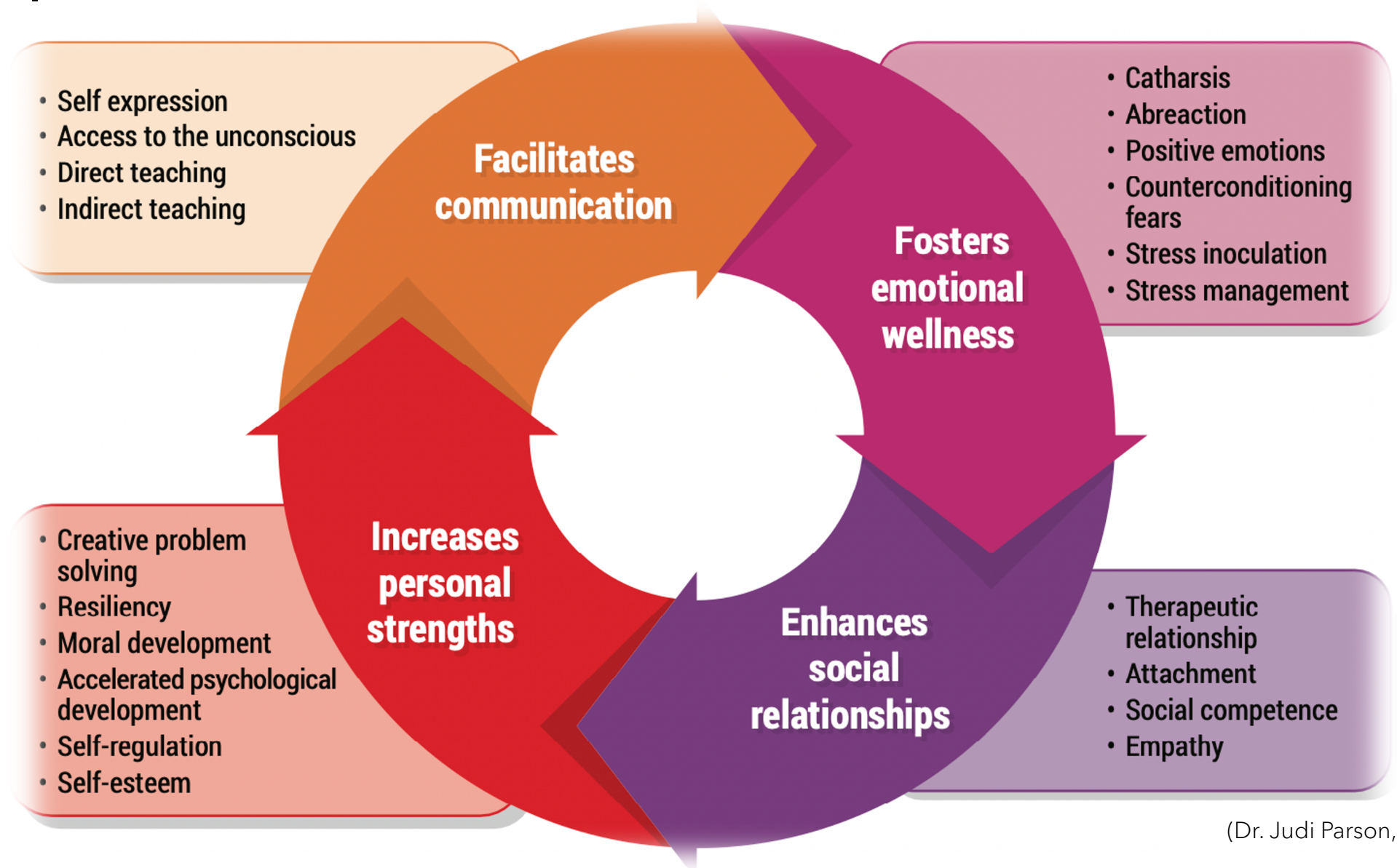
(Steinberg, 2014)

# What are you feeling?

- Worried
- Love
- Courage
- Sadness
- Pity
- Mad
- Nervousness
- Cheerful
- Lonely
- Alarmed
- Shocked
- Orneriness
- Resistant
- Worthwhile
- Anxious
- Satisfied
- Tender
- Pleased
- Rebellious
- Impatient
- Cautious
- Hopeful
- Embarrassed
- Bored
- Overwhelmed
- Jealous
- Shy
- Confident
- Content
- Fear
- Anger
- Happiness
- Joy
- Scared
- Confusion
- Anticipation
- Trust
- Surprise
- Joy
- Disgust
- Shame
- Vulnerable

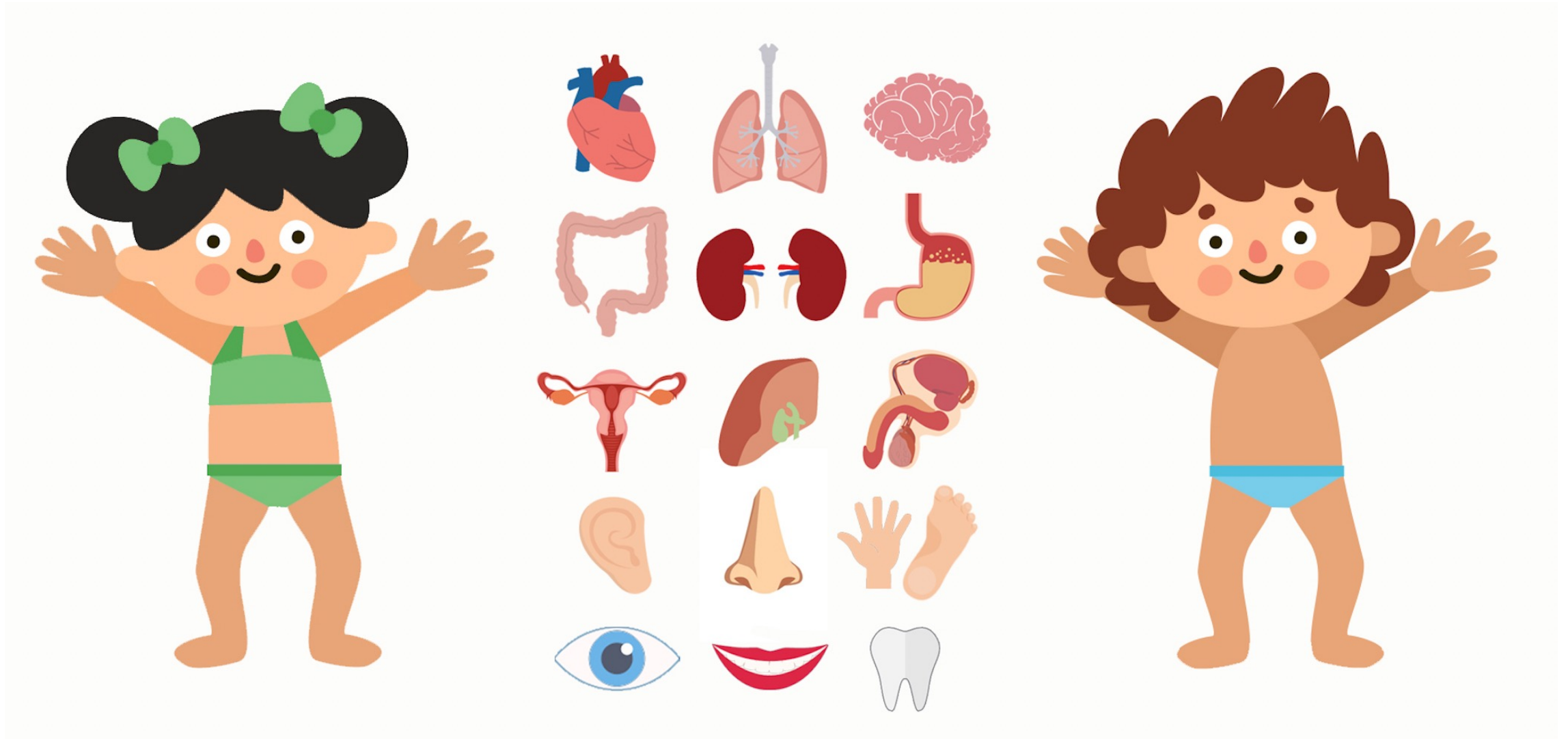
**GRIEF** + **Fear** = **Flooding**

# Play is important:



(Dr. Judi Parson, 2019)

# How are you surviving?



# School Support:

**It is important to find a program that fits the needs of your students, school, and community.**

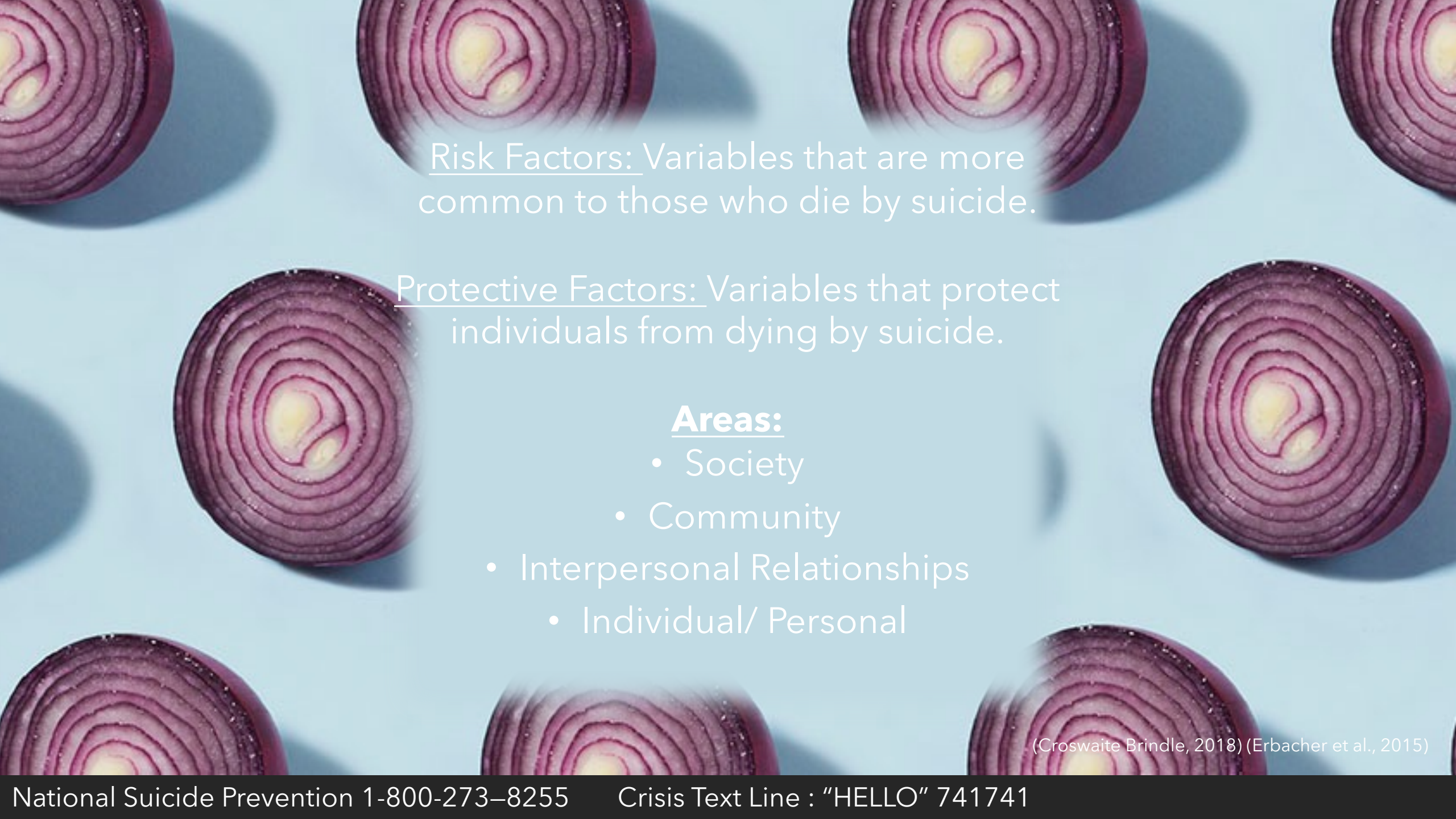
- [More than Sad](#) - American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)
  - Designed for parents and teachers to support high school students
  - [Want to learn more? Want to get trained?](#)
- [Signs of Suicide](#) (SOS)- Designed for middle and high school students
- [Sources of Strength](#) Includes supporting elementary school students
- [Trevor Project](#)- supporting LGBTQ youth
  - Phone: 1-866-488-7386
  - [Trevor Chat](#)- Free confidential web chat
  - Trevor Text: Text "START" to 678-678
  - Trevor Space: Social networking for LGBTQ youth under 25
- [Active Minds](#): Young adults

# Digital Sandbox:

- What does your grief look like?
- What does grief support look like for you?
- What do you want others to know about your story?
- Can you create a "tray" about \_\_\_\_\_ emotion?
- What do you need from your guardian for your grief?
- What do you need from your community?
- What is the best part of Camp Erin or Camp Mariposa?
- What makes you happy?
- What makes you sad?







Risk Factors: Variables that are more common to those who die by suicide.

Protective Factors: Variables that protect individuals from dying by suicide.

**Areas:**

- Society
- Community
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Individual/ Personal

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)

# Non Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI)

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**Direct and intentional injury with no intent of suicide**

**Include but not limited too:**

- Cutting
- Carving
- Abrasions
- Burning
- Hitting or punching self
- Erasing

**Replacement Strategies:**

- Call a friend or mentor
- Color a mandala
- Throw ice at a brick wall
- Exercise
- Follow a new recipe
- Call 1-800- DON'T CUT

(Bagwell, 2020)



“ Children learn  
more from what you  
are *than* what you teach.”

W.E.B. DuBois

(Bagwell, 2020)

**Positive and Negative stressors can increase the**

**NSSI**

**Stressors:**

- Academic
- Personal
- Social
- Family
- Environmental

# ALERT:

**A: ASK** about suicide inquiry

**L: Listen** for risk factors

**E: Engage** the protective factors

**R: Respond** with safety measures

**T: Tasks** stay connected

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018)

# A: ASK about suicide inquiry

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## **Upfront questions/ Direct questions/ Honest questions:**

### *Examples of Questions:*

- Have you been thinking about killing yourself?
- Have you been thinking about suicide?
- I have heard that others who have been feeling similar feelings to you, have considered suicide. Are you considering suicide?

## **Frequency/ Duration:**

### *Examples of Questions:*

- That sounds really tough. How often have you been feeling this way?
- How long do these feelings last?
- How do you control them? Can you control them?

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)

# A: <sup>ASK</sup> about suicide inquiry

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## **Visualization/ Imagery:**

*Examples of Questions:*

What would suicide look like for you?

When you think about suicide, what do you see?

## **Meaning:**

*Examples of Questions:*

What would suicide mean for you?

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)

# L: Listen for risk factors

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Feelings of **Hopelessness**

**Anxiety** and **agitation**

Sleep changes

Reporting **no purpose** in life

Feelings of being **trapped**

Increase **alcohol and/or drug use**

**Withdrawal** from friends, family, and community

Rage, **uncontrolled anger**, expressions of wanting or seeking revenge

High **risk and or reckless** behavior and activities

Dramatic **mood changes**

**Giving away** prized possessions

Sexual or Gender **minority status**

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)

# E: Engage the protective factors

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## **Easy access to effective, culturally competent care**

Support from medical and mental health care professionals

## **Coping, problem solving and conflict resolution skills**

Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide (e.g. firearms)

## **Strong connections to family members**

Connectedness to safe schools

Academic, artistic, athletic achievements

## **Nonviolent problem solving and conflict resolution**

Family acceptance for their sexual orientation and/or gender identity

## **A feeling of safety, support and connectivity at school through peer groups like Gay-Straight Alliances**

Positive connections with friends who share similar interests

## **Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide**

Positive role models and self esteem

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)



# E: Engage the protective factors

**YOU are stronger when you engage your resources:**

- Mental Health
- Family Support
- Positive Friends
- Mentors
- Healthy Activities
- Generosity
- Spirituality
- Physical Health

**How often do you need to review your list?**



(Sources of Strength, 2021)

Text your answer (712) 435-1406

**What resource do you need to engage in your life?**



# E: Engage the protective factors



Sources of strength can be adapted and explored for **A L L** ages:

- Notecard
- Journal
- Interactive word cloud
- Game
- Creative expression
  - Doodling
  - Mandala
  - Painting rocks
  - Nature walk

Family Support	Positive Friends	Mentors	Healthy Activities	Generosity	Spirituality	Medical Access	Mental Health
High five a family member (then wash your hands.)	Name 3 friends who have the letter "S" in their name	What do you need in a mentor?	Run/walk/skip/slide a lap around the house.	Write a thank you to someone.	Box breathing.	Find the nearest first-aid kit or band-aid.	How do you make yourself feel calm?
Paint/Draw a portrait of a family member in 60 seconds.	Text a friend "thank you!"	Who has taught you something in your life?	Snap your fingers or whistle for 60 seconds.	Do a chore around the house.	Spend 60 seconds in silence.	What's the fire escape route?	Describe your mood in 3 words.
Call a family member not in the room.	Draw a positive friend, other players guess who you've drawn.	Have you been a mentor before? When?	Quick! 60 second talent show!	How can you be generous today?	Where is your favorite place to go?	Spend 60 seconds laughing (real or fake).	Tell us a joke!

(Sources of Strength, 2021)

# R: Respond with safety measures

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7 steps total

**Step 1:** What are your warning signs? Triggers can include but are not limited to thoughts, images, thinking styles, moods, and or behaviors. When we recognize triggers, it makes using a plan to keep ourselves and thoughts safe. List your triggers below:

**Step 2:** Internal Coping Skills List. What are three things that you can do to take your mind off potential negative thoughts?

**Step 3:** External Coping Skills List. What are three places or people you can be with to take your mind off potential negative thoughts?

(Adapted from the Didi Hirsch  
Suicide Prevention Center)

# R: Respond with safety measures

7 steps total

**Step 4:** Who can you ask for help? List three people's name and telephone number in the order that you would call for support. Include your guardian's information. It is encouraged that you share with them your plan so that they know the best way to support you.

Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number	Availability
Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number	Availability
Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number	Availability
Guardian Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number	Availability
Guardian Name	Relationship to you	Phone Number	Availability

**Step 5:** Professional Resources: List your Therapist, Doctor and Local Emergency Contact

Therapist's Name	Phone Number	Availability
Primary Physician's Name	Phone Number	Availability
Local Emergency Number	Address	

**Step 6:** It is important to remove items that you may feel the need to use impulsively. What items do you need to remove? Who can take these items to help you feel safe? Please list below.

**Step 7:** List 2-3 things, places and or people that make you happy or bring you hope.

(Adapted from the Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Center)

# T: Tasks stay connected

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What can help you? (Think: coping skills, resources, & activities)

Writing down material information is helpful. What do you need to write down? How can you share what is written down to help maintain your safety?

Support is critical- Who are 3 people that can support you?

As a parent/ facilitator/ educator/ therapist it is important to pause and reflect about the impact other's ideations have on you:

- mentally
- physically
- emotionally
- spiritually

(Croswaite Brindle, 2018) (Erbacher et al., 2015)

# Support

- Is it okay if support changes?
- What do you say to the kids?
- What do you need to feel supported?
- What you need may not match your partner or children.



# What's Your Role?

To speak up & ask **direct** questions!

- Inquire about mood swings you are seeing.
- Ask about a change in motivation.
- Explore an attitude change.
- Don't ignore changes in maturity.

**To acknowledge your own feelings and compassion!**

When someone is engaging in an active plan:

- Stay calm!
- Remind them how brave they are that they shared their feelings!
- Reassure them you're going to help them get help. You care, they matter!
- Ask for support in reducing immediate stressors.
- Ask for support in removing and or securing harmful and or lethal means.



# What's Your Role In an Immediate Crisis?

## Crisis Behavior can include:

- Finding a suicide note
- A friend telling you they are hearing voices to kill themselves
- Feeling that if you leave a friend, they will kill themselves
- Finding out that your friend has made a non-lethal attempt to kill themselves

## **Immediately:**

Call 9-1-1 or take them to the local emergency room

Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

***Remind them you are not going to leave them alone***

Secure all harmful and or lethal means ( knives, firearms etc.)

All it takes is ONE caring  
and **compassionate**  
person to take notice and  
start the conversation.

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CAN YOU CHALLENGE ONE FRIEND IN ALSO BECOMING ONE  
CARING & COMPASSIONATE PERSON TO START THE  
CONVERSATION?

(AFSP, 2018)



What is one positive word you're taking with you tonight?

Text your vote to  
(712) 435-1496




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Let's Stay Connected: @Resilientminds



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# Sources:

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