



Parent/Guardian,

TXT4Life Grant Coordinators are visiting area schools this Spring to speak with students about a new texting service available for suicide prevention. They may be visiting your student's school this Spring, and would like to share some information about TXT4Life with you.

The following are the goals of the TXT4Life team and how we would like to approach this topic with your students:

- Present information about the TXT4Life program and basic suicide prevention education (*Discuss what to be aware of in people at risk and what to do if a friend approaches you about suicidal thoughts*)
- Get the call line and text line number into the students' phones, so it is available as a resource for them or their friends if needed
- Collect generic information regarding who students talk to when in crisis (*This will help us target identified groups of people for future training outreach*)
- Give a bracelet to each student that includes the texting information and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number
- Ask students to take a brief, anonymous survey about the presentation

Our hope is to provide students with the resources they need if ever faced with suicidal thoughts and the skills to help a friend find the help they need in a crisis situation.

It is saving lives!

Crisis Connection, the call center that responds to both the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and text number, has seen an increase in youth using the crisis line since the text service began. Prior to our funding through the grant, the Minnesota affiliate of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline reported answering about 25 calls a month from youth and young adults – a small percentage in comparison to their volume from other ages. With implementation of the text line, they are now receiving on average 300 text message conversations per month from this age group. We are seeing that, for the youth and young adults, texting is the way that they are communicating, and adding this service to the 1-800-273-8255 number has been a great benefit in saving lives! We expect that number to continue to increase as we begin expansion of the program statewide.

We still need to learn more

Because of TXT4Life's success, it has been recommended by their federal partners to apply to be a best practice program. In order to apply for this designation, we want to learn more about the impact it is having on youth. In addition, we want to learn more about how TXT4Life works because:

- We want TXT4Life to be as effective as possible. To do this, we want to learn how youth who use TXT4Life are doing after they use the service. We want to know if TXT4Life helped them, and if youth get extra help if their TXT4Life counselor recommends it.
- We want to know if youth learn from TXT4Life school presentations.
- We want to expand TXT4Life to make it available to more youth. We need more information to show that TXT4Life is an effective program to have in other places throughout the country.



TXT4Life is working with independent researchers to evaluate the program

TXT4Life is working with University of Minnesota-Duluth and Wilder Research, a non-profit research company in Saint Paul, to learn more about how well the services work for youth. Much of this research will focus on analyzing program records. In addition, we will ask youth to participate in this evaluation in two ways:

- **School presentation surveys:** After the TXT4Life presentation at schools, students will be asked to take a brief, anonymous survey about the presentation. The surveys ask students questions like how much they learned about suicide prevention, if they feel more confident asking for help, and their opinions about the usefulness of the presentation. Students will be given the option to skip questions, or not take the survey, if they do not want to take it.
- **TXT4Life service surveys:** Youth who have used the TXT4Life services within the last three months will be asked to take a brief survey. The survey will ask questions about the youth's opinion of how helpful the TXT4Life program was, and whether they have gotten the help they needed since using TXT4Life. These surveys will be administered by trained TXT4Life staff via text message. Answers will not be attached to youth's names. Only trained counselors will see youths' phone numbers. Youth may refuse to take the survey, may skip any questions, and may quit the survey at any time. If at any time during the survey, the counselor feels the youth needs immediate help, the counselor will discontinue the survey and attempt to help the youth.

Research results will be used to improve the program, and to offer the program to more youth

If the research shows that the program works well for youth, we will work with national partners to make this program available to more young people. Research results will be reported all together. No student names or phone numbers will ever be reported.

Parents may decide not to have their student take part in the evaluation

If for any reason you do not wish your student to participate in the evaluation, please sign the attached form and return it by May 1st, 2014.

TXT4Life is appreciative of your willingness to be a partner in suicide prevention efforts to save lives! We look forward to [NAME OF SCHOOL]'s partnership with TXT4Life.

Thank you!

For questions about TXT4Life, or to share ideas, you can contact:

Meghann Levitt
TXT4Life Program Coordinator
Carlton County Public Health and Human Services
218-878-2846

For more information, please visit our website at www.txt4life.org

TXT4LIFE Overview:

TXT4Life is a suicide prevention effort that provides texting as an option for youth to connect with a trained professional to get help.

Our Pilot:

TXT4LIFE is funded through a Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration – SAMHSA Grant for fiscal years 2011-2014. Prior to our funding through the grant, the Minnesota affiliate of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) reported answering about 25 calls a month from youth and young adults statewide – a small percentage in comparison to their volume from other ages. With implementation of the text line, they are now receiving over 300 text messages per month from this age group (amounting to 3,845 individuals through 2012). We are seeing that, for the youth and young adults, texting is the way that they are communicating, and adding this service to the 1-800-273-8255 number has been a great benefit in saving lives!



WHERE:

- 7 Counties (Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis)
- 4 Tribes (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Red Lake)

WHO:

- Canvas Health/Crisis Connection (Minnesota Affiliate for the NSPL) responds to the texts under the direction of agency policies and protocols.
- Carlton County coordinates activities, outreach, and evaluation associated with the grant.
- Other partners include Lutheran Social Services, the Human Development Center, the University of Minnesota Duluth, and others.

WHAT:

- Outreach
 - Presentations to students in grades 7-12 – includes education as well as the NSPL call and text resources. 20,600 students have heard the message through a direct presentation.
 - Tele-mental health resources for suicide crisis response becoming established in schools and mental health clinics.
- Training
 - Two evidence based trainings available: QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training). 1300 people have been trained in either QPR or ASIST.
 - 104 students have attended our annual suicide prevention student training.
- Marketing
 - Student inspired posters, bracelets, and t-Shirts help spread the word about TXT4Life.
 - Our website (www.txt4life.org) and other social media help promote the resource.



Legislative:

The 2013 Omnibus Bill, passed on May 17th, states, “\$625,000 in fiscal year 2014 and \$625,00 in fiscal year 2015 is for a grant to a nonprofit organization to establish and implement a statewide text message suicide prevention program. The program shall implement a suicide prevention counseling text line designed to use text messaging to connect with crisis counselors and to obtain emergency information and referrals to local resources in the local community. The program shall include training within schools and communities to encourage the use of the program”.

Please refer questions and gather additional information by contacting Carlton County Public Health and Human Services.

Project Director: Dave Lee, Director, 218-879-4511

Project Manager: Donna LeKander, 218-878-2558

Program Coordinator: Meghann Levitt, Health Educator, 218-878-2846

Program Coordinator: Sierra Beckman, Health Educator, 218-878-2592

If you do not want your student to participate in the TXT4Life evaluation, please fill out the following form and return it to:

*Crisis Connection
Attn: Eric McClellan
1550 E. 78th Street
Richfield, MN 55243*

by May 1st, 2014

I do not want my child to participate in (check all that apply):

Student presentation surveys

IMPORTANT: In order to make sure we do not ask your child to take a student presentation survey, we need to know their name. We will only use this information to ensure we do not ask your child to take a survey.

Student’s Name (please print): _____

TXT4Life service surveys (only for youth who use TXT4Life services)

IMPORTANT: In order to make sure we do not ask your child to take a TXT4Life service survey, we need to know their cell phone number. Since we do not gather youth names during services, this is the only way we can make sure we do not ask your child to take the survey, if they use the TXT4Life services. We will only use this information to make sure we do not send this phone number a survey.

Student’s Cell Phone Number: (____) _____ - _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

