

New form submission

[YSPTF Testimony Form](#)

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<i>NOTE: All testimony submitted is subject to public disclosure under the Kansas Open Records Act and will become a part of the official record of the Task Force.</i>	
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Meeting at which you wish to testify:	Oct. 18, Olathe
What hurdles have you experienced and/or lessons learned through your efforts?	I am a suicide attempt survivor myself. One of the biggest hurdles I have observed is the audience that SPEAK UP is getting are those who have already lost a child to suicide. While we are here to offer support to those and let them know they are not alone in their loss and pain. We still do not appear to be getting the attention of adults who might not even realize there is a child in their very home or classroom who is silently struggling.
What efforts have proven to be successful in your purpose to address youth suicide?	Using our positive mental health resiliency programming to open the dialogue among teens. Increasing mental health literacy with hopes of decreasing the loss of young lives.
Recommendations or suggestions for the task force to consider:	
Upload Testimony	testimony- Suicide Prevention Education Awareness for Kids United as Partners.docx
Captcha	False

Suicide Prevention Education Awareness for Kids United as Partners (SPEAK UP) a not for profit charitable foundation created in 2015 by two families that both suffered the devastating loss of a child to suicide. Since the organization began in 2015, the suicide statistics have increased at an alarming rate. It has become a national crisis with death by suicide increasing over 30% in the last decade. I myself am a suicide attempt survivor.

It is our hope that SPEAK UP will provide education and awareness, bridging gaps between our community, schools and parents. We wish to encourage conversations with our children, provide adults/ parents/teens information on how to identify warning signs and offer resources if they think someone is at risk. Most importantly, we want to end the stigma associated with mental illness and teach kids that it is okay to ask for help.

Young people are dealing with a lot of stress—every day. Things like not having enough money, hassles with school, family issues, impact of social media and even their closest relationships, can completely stress them out.

So how do they deal with challenges and setbacks and keep getting on with their lives? *Everyone* has the capacity to become more resilient, able to overcome serious challenges and come out stronger on the other side, not broken by the experience. Positive and thriving coping strategies are a key building block of the way to bounce back.

We do this through community/school events, speakers, training and teen-led positive mental health campaigns. The goals are to help teens understand that it is OK not to be everyone else's definition of perfect. We want to reach teens with a positive message of self-worth and value, as well as reinforce the idea that being yourself is good enough.

Many adolescents are struggling with trying to find their own way, exploring different parts of their identity or figuring out what they want to do with the rest of their lives. They're experiencing transitions from middle to high school to college, making discoveries about their sexual orientation or trying to find work and live on their own after leaving their familial home.

Our hope is that it helps someone who might be quietly struggling and potentially suicidal to find the courage to talk about it, or that it enables a peer or teacher to recognize the symptoms, so they might head off a tragedy.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Savner Levinson, MS.Ed
SPEAK UP | Community Outreach Facilitator

