

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH PROJECT

New York State

## What is *Sources of Strength*?

- A school-wide **health promotion** and **suicide prevention** program.
- Training for **diverse student Peer Leaders** who conduct **focused ‘peer-to-peer’ prevention activities** in their school with adult mentoring.
- A key goal is to **increase positive help-seeking behaviors** among ALL students in a school and **break down ‘codes of silence’** that often keep teens from seeking adult help when in crisis.
- Prior research has shown that *Sources of Strength* training **enhances high school students’ help-seeking** and **partnering with ‘trusted adults’** to help distressed peers.

## How is *Sources of Strength* distinct from most suicide prevention programs?

- Uses a **‘strength-based’ resilience model** aimed at **increasing eight protective factors** (sources of strength) and **decreasing risk factors** such as social isolation and ineffective coping behaviors.
- **The power of peer group influences** on norms and behaviors is recognized by **training diverse ‘Peer Leaders’** and **Adult Advisors**; **most suicide prevention efforts focus on either adults or youth, not both.**

## How can schools participate? What is expected and provided?

- **Administrative support** for **two adult advisors** and **commitment to training** and **evaluation** components.
- Schools are **assigned to begin training at different times** as part of the evaluation.
- **Adult advisors:** two school staff receive **4-6 hours of training** to recruit and mentor student Peer Leaders (about 40 hours total time over 1yr\*). \*compensation provided if funding continues to be available.
- **School-wide commitment by staff:** nominate students, allow Peer Leaders to conduct messaging activities.
- **Evaluation:** Peer Leaders receive parent permission for surveys; brief surveys for other students
- **University of Rochester:** provides training, technical support, supplies **at no cost** to participating schools.

## The *Sources of Strength* Process

1. **Administration commitment**, staff engagement.
2. **Training** and **ongoing technical assistance** provided by Sources of Strength Director Mark LoMurray and University of Rochester
3. **Adult Advisor training (1/2 day workshop)**
4. **Peer Leader training** – 3-4 hours along with adult advisors
5. Peer Leaders meet bi-weekly with adult advisors over 3-4 months (30 min – 1 hour) to plan/review Action Steps.
6. **Five follow-up Action Steps by Peer Leaders :**
  - Step 1 Contact Trusted Adults
  - Step 2 Contact 5-10 peers who name ‘trusted adults’
  - Step 3 Classroom presentations on Sources of Strength
  - Step 4 Hope, Help, Strength Messages
  - Step 5 Honoring Celebration

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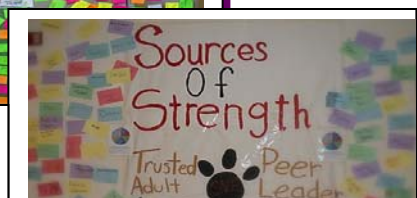
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Wall of Trust at  
Perry High School,  
NY



Names of Peer Leaders and Trusted  
Adults at Spencer-Van Etten HS, NY