



What is Hope Squad?

QPR partners with Hope Squad, a peer-to-peer school suicide prevention program. Hope Squads reduce youth suicide through education, training, and peer intervention. Hope Squad members are nominated by their classmates as trustworthy peers and trained by advisors. They are not taught to act as counselors, but rather how to be peer advocates, recognize signs of suicide ideation, and respectfully report any concerns to an adult. Hope Squads are the eyes and ears of a school. There are over 700 Hope Squads in the U.S. and Canada and growing.

The strategy for reducing youth suicide is by training, building, and creating change:

- **Train.** Hope Squads train students to recognize suicide warning signs and act on those warnings to break the silence.
- **Build.** Hope Squads build positive relationships among peers to facilitate acceptance for seeking help.
- **Change.** Hope Squads work to change the school culture regarding suicide by reducing stigma about suicide and mental health.

Hope Squads have six areas of focus:

- **Safety.** Hope Squad members recognize the warning signs of suicide and refer struggling peers to trusted adults.
- **Connectedness.** Hope Squad members actively look for ways to support their peers and increase connectedness in their schools.
- **Anti-Bullying.** Hope Squad members recognize bullying, intervene, and encourage other students not to be bystanders.
- **Mental Wellness.** Hope Squad members promote resilience and self-care and work closely with their local mental health agency.
- **Reducing Stigma.** Hope Squad members reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and mental health and show that it's okay to get help.
- **Substance Abuse Prevention.** Hope Squad members understand the complexity of substance abuse, encourage peers to make healthy choices, and persuade their peers to get help.

What do Hope Squad advisors do?

Hope Squad advisors train Hope Squad members at least once a month on topics regarding suicide prevention. Members are taught through scaffolded, evidence-based modules and empowered to reach out to struggling peers and persuade them to get help. After Hope Squad members refer a peer to a counselor or another trusted adult, advisors debrief with the member.

They provide ongoing support for and monitoring of Hope Squad members as well as assist in coordinating events and activities designed to spread hope and suicide awareness.

Why is QPR integral to Hope Squad?

Hope Squad recognizes QPR as an evidence-based training program and registered best practice training program for the prevention of suicide across the age span. At least one advisor from every Hope Squad school is required to be a Certified QPR Instructor, registered with the QPR Institute. The first Hope Squad lesson every year is training students in QPR. Members learn myths and facts about suicide, the three types of warning signs (talk, action, and situation) relevant to young people, and how to question, persuade, and refer a peer. Members take turns role-playing QPR with each other at the end of the lesson. Additionally, each lesson includes a reminder from QPR training.

What is in the Hope Squad curriculum?

Our primary lessons include recognizing risk factors and signs of suicide, talking to peers at risk of suicide, knowing the resources that can help a peer in crisis, and persuading a peer to seek help from a trusted adult. The first lesson of every year is QPR. Additionally, Hope Squad members learn about mental illness, resilience, self-care, bullying, grief, and being a supportive peer, among other topics. Junior high and high school members have opportunities to share what they learn with their family, school, and community members.