



Awareness of Youth Suicide Issues
A Survey of Selected Middle and High Schools in Washington

Prepared for:

Youth Suicide Prevention Program
Seattle, Washington

Prepared by:

Gilmore Research Group

July 2003



July 30, 2003

TO: Sue Eastgard, Youth Suicide Prevention Program
FROM: JoElla Weybright, Gilmore Research Group
RE: School Survey Findings

The Youth Suicide Prevention Program (YSPP) contracted with Gilmore Research Group to conduct a survey of selected Washington schools regarding awareness and knowledge of suicide-related issues among school personnel. This memo summarizes what was done and what was learned in the survey.

Method

This was designed as a self-administered questionnaire for distribution to all school staff. It was suggested that distribution occur through the school mail system, although the actual distribution system was left up to the discretion of each school. A cover letter accompanied the questionnaire, along with a return mail envelope for return directly to Gilmore Research. No names were requested and anonymity was protected at both the personal and school level. Copies of the cover letter and questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B.

YSPP selected ten schools that had previous experience with YSPP training, and provided a list of other schools not previously involved with YSPP. The YSPP schools all cooperated with the survey. Gilmore Research made numerous efforts to enlist cooperation among the other schools, including telephone calls to school decision-makers, faxes explaining the survey, and mailing examples of what the survey packets. Unfortunately, many schools were unable or unwilling to commit to participating and the returns from the non-program schools were low. (See Appendix B for a copy of the explanatory fax to schools and a complete list of non-program schools that were contacted.)

A total of 845 questionnaires were provided to cover the reported number of staff in 14 willing schools. Returns numbered 229 completed questionnaires, a 27% response rate from 13 of the 14 schools. This rate is reasonable given reliance on the schools for distribution, the survey topic, the voluntary nature of the survey, and a lack of any follow-up. The process of recruiting schools, sending materials and receiving returns covered a period from March through early May, 2003.

School participation and returns were as follows:

Program Schools	Non-Program Schools
Blanchet High School -- 32	Hoquiam High School -- 12
Truman High School -- 1	Black River High School -- 2
Orting High School -- 20	Shorecrest High School -- 28
Granger High School -- 8	
Cheney High School -- 49	
Tieton Middle School -- 7	
Naches Valley High School -- 19	
Medical Lake High School -- 5	
Mark Morris High School -- 19	
Inglemoor High School -- 27	
Total Returns -- 187	Total Returns -- 42

Most of the respondents were in certified positions (86%), while 11% were in classified and 3% in other positions. One respondent in ten had been at his/her school for a year (10%), 31% for two to five years, and the remaining 59% for more than five years.

Summary of Findings

A computer printout of responses to each question by Program and Non-Program schools appears under separate cover. A summary of these responses is given here. Due to the self-selected nature of this sample, there has been no statistical testing applied, but notable differences between responses from Program and Non-Program schools are reported. Where no mention of differences is made, it can be assumed that responses from the two types of schools were essentially the same.

Awareness of Teen Suicide Warning Signs

This was an open-ended response that was filled in with the respondents' own words and multiple responses were allowed. Over half of the respondents named something about outward indications, withdrawal or depression and close to half mentioned behavior changes and giving things away:

- Writing, talking, drawing about ending life, saying goodbye (59% of 229)
- Socially withdrawn, isolated (56%)
- Depressed, angry (56%)
- Behavior changes in sleeping habits, eating, appearance, hygiene, school attendance (47%)
- Giving personal possessions away (43%)

Program school respondents were somewhat more likely to name behavior changes and non-program school respondents were more likely to mention something about giving away possessions.

One in four or fewer respondents named other signs:

- Drop in grades (28% of 229)
- Attitude change, apathy, hopelessness, listless (23%)
- Mood swings (17%)
- Drug or alcohol abuse (15%)
- Self-mutilation, prior suicide attempts (11%)
- Family / relationship problems or changes (9%)
- Acting out, rebellious or risky behaviors (7%)

Program school respondents were more likely to name self-mutilation or prior attempts, while respondents from the non-program schools were more likely to mention giving things away and changing attitudes.

Recommended Action if Teen Exhibits Signs of Suicide

Respondents were asked, again in an open-ended question, to say what they would do if they saw or had contact with a teen who exhibited signs of being suicidal. Most would turn to a counselor and over two-thirds would try to talk with the student and let him/her know someone cared. About one in four would contact the student's parents, while other suggested actions were mentioned by one respondent in ten, or fewer.

- Notify / refer to counselor, school or elsewhere (84% of 229)
- Talk with, let student know I care; show interest; ask questions (69%)
- Contact / talk with student's parents (25%)
- Refer student to help line or other professional service (10%)
- Notify principal or supervisor (7%)
- Notify care team or school nurse (6%)
- Talk to other teachers, student's peers or friends (4%)
- Stay with the student (4%)
- Follow-up with student (3%)
- Make student sign a contract (2%)

The program school respondents were more likely to say they would notify a counselor or their superior at the school. Respondents in the non-program schools were far more likely to urge the student to use a help line or other community services. They were also somewhat more likely to say they would talk and show attention to the student or talk to the student's friends or peers.

Comfort in Dealing with Suicidal Teen

When asked to rate their comfort level in dealing directly with a teen who is suicidal, respondents rated themselves an average of 6.4 on a 10-point scale. The scale was anchored at 1 and 10, with 1="would feel totally inadequate to step in and help anyone" and 10="would feel totally capable that I could be of help to a youth in that situation." There was no difference between the average ratings by program and non-program school respondents.

Overall, more than one-third (36%) gave an 8, 9 or 10 rating and 16% gave a 1, 2 or 3 rating.

Awareness of Suicide Awareness or Prevention Programs

Most of the program school respondents (84%) said they were aware of a suicide awareness or prevention efforts in their schools within the past two years. Fewer (64%) of the non-program school respondents were aware of such efforts in their schools. Asked to tell in their own words about these efforts, the 167 aware respondents described both specific and generalized things:

- Student / peer presentations, student prevention group (32% of 167)
- Suicide prevention group (unspecific) (18%)
- Awareness Week or Program (17%)
- Specific mention of YSPP (2%)

- Information from counselor (19% of 167)
- Faculty awareness talks, training (12%)
- Literature, pamphlets, posters (10%)
- Support groups (10%)
- Health class (7%)
- All other comments, each less than 1% (19%)

Almost all of the mention regarding presentations, suicide prevention groups, and all of the YSPP mention came from program school respondents. Non-program school respondents were more likely to report having had faculty talks or training and to name one or two isolated efforts.

While we know that each of the program schools had a YSPP effort in their schools, it should be noted that no information about efforts was collected from non-program school officials and we cannot report what, if any, types of programs or training they may have offered within the past two years.

Training Experience

Half of all respondents said they have had training in suicide prevention at some time and half said they had not. This was true at both the program and non-program schools.

Among those who said they had training (107 respondents), workshops and presentations was the most frequent source (47%), followed by college or graduate work (25%), school inservice meetings (15%), personal counseling experience (13%) or YSPP (5%).

Program schools were the only ones to name YSPP. Non-program school respondents were more likely to say they had had personal counseling experience.

Added Comments

Respondents were invited to add any further comments that they wished at the end of the questionnaire. These comments have been transcribed and appear in Appendix A.

Conclusions and Recommendations

All of the respondents were able to name warning signs of suicide and say what they would do if they encountered those signs. No one said they didn't know of any signs or were unsure what they would do. There was also a "high moderate" self-rating of comfort in dealing with a suicidal teen (6.4 on a 10-point scale). Half of the respondents indicated having some type of suicide prevention training.

Responses from staff at program schools were much like those from staff at non-program schools, although the number of survey schools and returns from the non-program schools was relatively small. Program school respondents were more likely to name certain signs and actions that could be indicative of what was stressed in the training.

Certainly, the program school respondents had recall of specific training that occurred in their schools, including mention of the Youth Suicide Prevention Program.

If this study is repeated in future years, it will be important to have more cooperation from non-program schools to assure reliability in comparisons between program and non-program school experiences. It is clear that cooperation can be gained in program schools through the YSPP contacts. In non-program schools, we recommend that an advocate for the survey be located through personal contact, either by a YPSS staff member, someone from the local health department, or other community person. This advocate might be a counselor, a teacher or any staff person who can “sell” the survey concept to the principal and assure that staff has an opportunity to participate. Gilmore or any other research vendor can work with the internal advocate to gain the appropriate approvals and get materials into the principal’s hands, then be the objective third party to assure that confidentiality of participants is protected. Just the fact of being exposed to the survey questions will help raise awareness among the non-program schools.

In both program and non-program schools, efforts should be made to obtain the widest possible survey participation. It’s possible that people with the most experience dealing with suicide issues might be the most likely to feel “qualified” to fill out the survey. Others might look at it and say, “This is not for me,” and the survey design relies on as high a response rate as possible. It’s hard, but not impossible, to minimize self-selection in a voluntary survey situation. For example, it would help if the survey were introduced in a staff meeting—what it is and why it’s worthwhile—then time allowed during the meeting to fill out the survey. We like the convenience of using the internal staff mail system, but there is no personal touch to encourage participation.

A final recommendation is to ask people *when* they last had training for suicide prevention (Q.5 in the questionnaire). It would be interesting to see the proportion of people who have had recent training. It might also be interesting to ask if the training was offered through the school or some other organization, just to give YSPP some idea of other resources that schools are using.

APPENDIX A
Added Comments

Q8- Please add any further comments you have regarding youth suicide and it's prevention.

(NOTE: These are transcribed verbatim just as the respondents wrote them.)

ENGAGE KIDS IN CONVERSATION, ASK THEM IF THEY'RE OKAY AND BE READY TO SPEND TIME TALKING WITH THEM.

THANKS FOR TAKING ON THIS SUBJECT.

SUICIDE IN YOUTH IS GROWING. PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMS ARE SO IMPORTANT. ANY PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT OR MENTORSHIP TO STUDENTS WHO DON'T HAVE HELP AVAILABLE FROM FAMILY OR SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE IN THEIR LIVES WOULD, I BELIEVE, REDUCE THE RATE OF YOUTH SUICIDE.

IT SHOULD NOT BE IGNORED. TEACHERS SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE. SOME ADDITIONAL FOCUS OR ATTENTION FOR GAY AND LESBIAN STUDENTS, BECAUSE THEY HAVE A HIGHER RATE OF ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

I HAVE NO SUGGESTIONS, ONLY QUESTIONS. ONE OF MY CONCERNS IS EDUCATING THE GENERAL SCHOOL POPULATION ON SENSITIVITY TRAINING. EVEN WITH OUR SUICIDE AWARENESS PROGRAM, I HAVE OBSERVED CONTINUED IGNORANCE FROM SOME LEADERS.

THERE HAVE BEEN VERY FEW AT BLANCHET SINCE '59 WHEN I STARTED TEACHING AND COACHING HERE. A FORMER STUDENT ATHLETE FROM BLANCHET, WHO WAS ALSO A FRIEND OF MINE COMMITTED SUICIDE WHEN HE WAS 40. I WAS TOTALLY UNAWARE OF ANY SIGNS LEADING U TO THIS AND I HAD VISITED WITH HIM AT LEAST ON A MONTHLY BASIS RIGHT UP TO HIS DEATH. I RECENTLY ATTENDED THE FUNERAL OF ANOTHER BLANCHET STUDENT/ATHLETE WHO TOOK HIS LIFE IN HIS MID 40'S. GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR WORK. IN THIS DAY AND AGE THERE SEEMS TO BE MANY MORE AND HEAVIER STRESSES ON TODAY'S YOUTH. THE UNCERTAINTIES AND EFFECT OF WAR, VIOLENCE, THE DOWN ECONOMY AND THE DIFFICULTY IN FINDING LASTING POSITIVE CONSTANCE IN ONE'S LIVES ARE ALL FACTORS IN MAKING YOUTH'S LIVES FILLED WITH UNCERTAINTY.

PARENTS NEED EDUCATING!

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT! A STUDENT TOOK HIS LIFE DURING MY FIRST YEAR (17 YEARS AGO) OF TEACHING AT THIS SCHOOL. I HAD NO CLUE, AND DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO READ THE SIGNS. ANOTHER STUDENT, MAYBE 10 YEARS AGO, LEAPED FROM THE AURORA BRIDGE. AGAIN, I'D SEEN NO CLUES AND CONTINUE TO WONDER WHETHER I'D HAVE BEEN ABLE TO INTERVENE IF I'D BEEN MORE ALERT.

ACTUALLY HAD A STUDENT TA THAT ASSISTED IN MY CLASS COMMIT SUICIDE ONE NIGHT AND DIDN'T HAVE ANY PRECURSORS. SHE HAD AGREED TO BRING IN SOME VIDEOS FOR ANOTHER CLASS THE NEXT DAY.

FEW STUDENTS HAVE TRAINING AND IT IS USUALLY THE STUDENTS WHO DO NOT HAVE NEED TO USE IT.

Q8- Please add any further comments you have regarding youth suicide and it's prevention, continued

HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE REGARDING A STUDENT WHO WAS RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED AND HAVE HAD SEVERAL STUDENTS IN THE SUICIDE SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP.

I WAS A DORM DIRECTOR IN COLLEGE AND FOUND A GIRL WHO HAD ATTEMPTED SUICIDE. WE WERE ABLE TO SAVE HER. WE PUT OUR SON IN COUNSELING AFTER HE SAID HE WANTED TO KILL HIMSELF. HE'S DOING BETTER NOW.

WE ARE MAKING A REAL CONCENTRATED EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AT ORTING HIGH SCHOOL AND WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

WE NEED SPEAKERS WHO ADDRESS NOT ONLY EMOTIONAL ISSUES, BUT ALSO THE BIO/CHEMICAL ASPECTS OF DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE.

IT IS A MAJOR ISSUE.

OUR DAUGHTER BECAME MILDLY SUICIDAL AT ONE POINT. MY HUSBAND AND I TALKED TO HER AND WORKED WITH HER QUITE A BIT. THAT WAS FOUR YEARS AGO AND SHE'S A VERY POSITIVE PERSON NOW. I BELIEVE IT WAS MOSTLY HER UNDERSTANDING OF AND LEARNING ON CHRISTIAN CONC

IN MY OPINION, THERE ARE A LOT MORE STUDENTS IN NEED OF COUNSELING FOR SUICIDE THAN PEOPLE REALIZE.

IN WASHINGTON STATE, IT'S THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR YOUNG ADULTS 14-24. THANK YOU FOR DOING THIS RESEARCH ON A VITAL ISSUE.

YOUTH SUICIDE IS A GROWING PROBLEM. STUDENTS OFTEN FEEL OVERWHELMED WITH STUDIES AND ACTIVITIES ALONG WITH TRYING TO FIT IN WITH PEERS. ALSO, MORE STUDENTS ARE HAVING TO DEAL WITH EXTENDED FAMILIES AND STEPPARENTS.

IT'S A LARGE PROBLEM WHICH NEEDS TO BE WORKED ON.

SUE EASTGARD HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN MAKING OUR PROGRAM HELP STUDENTS. THE STUDENTS ATTRACTED TO BEING PART OF OUR GROUP ARE USUALLY NEEDY AND HAVE BEEN SOMEHOW TOUCHED BY SUICIDE.

WHAT ARE SOME CURRICULUM GUIDELINES TO HELP WITH STUDENTS DEALING WITH BULLYING AND TO HELP PREVENT BULLYING?

I HAVE EXPERIENCED IT IN MY OWN FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

TRAINING IN BULLYING AND HARASSMENT, HOW TO HELP THE VICTIMS.

I FEEL THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AT THE ELEMENTARY, INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY LEVELS. OUR CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS. WE NEED TO MAKE OUR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS MORE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR EDUCATION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL REGARDING SUICIDE PREVENTION.

LISTEN TO THE KID, TAKE HIM OR HER SERIOUSLY.

NEED TO INCREASE AWARENESS ACTIVITIES.

YOUTH NEED SIGNIFICANT ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES. WE NEED TO BE THERE FOR KIDS. STUDENT PEER SUPPORT GROUP NEEDS RECRUITMENT EFFORT.

Q8- Please add any further comments you have regarding youth suicide and it's prevention, continued

I WISH I KNEW MORE ABOUT WAYS TO HELP A TROUBLED PERSON. YOU ARE NOT ALWAYS IN SCHOOL WHEN YOU NEED TO HELP A PERSON.

I KNOW WE HAD 3 KIDS ATTEMPT LAST YEAR, BUT THERE WAS NO COMMUNICATION ABOUT THESE KIDS BY SCHOOL PEOPLE. THE KIDS TOLD ME? THIS SEEMS BACKWARDS
HOW EFFECTIVE IS EARLY DETECTION?
WE'RE AT AN INCREASED RISK FOR YOUTH SUICIDE.
4 1/2 YEARS IN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP THERAPY FOR MANIC DEPRESSION AND SUICIDAL EPISODES.

THE SCHOOLS NEED TO BE AWARE BUT THE REAL PREVENTION MUST COME FROM THE HOME.
IN RECENT YEARS, OUR HIGH SCHOOL AND OUR COUNTY, HAS HAD SEVERAL INCIDENTS I HAVE HEARD MAKES US AT RISK. I WOULD HOPE OUR FUNDING FOR A SPECIAL PERSON WOULD CONTINUE.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE DEALT WITH THIS A LOT IN THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. AS A RESULT, I DO NOT HESITATE TO QUESTION KIDS. I AM VERY UP FRONT WITH THEM AND THEIR PARENTS. I WOULD RATHER BE OVER CAUTIOUS THAN NOT ASK AND LOSE A STUDENT.
WE NEED MORE TRAINING!

I HAVE A LIST OF ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS AVAILABLE FOR MY STUDENTS TO WHO MAY WISH TO CONTACT A LOCAL SERVICE AVAILABLE TO THEM. MULTIPLE COPIES SO I CAN GIVE IT TO THEM IF THE NEED ARISES.

THE FUNDS WE HAVE ARE LACKING.

THIS IS ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT JOBS. I HAVE HAD SUCCESS PREVENTING TEEN SUICIDE BY HONESTLY AND FORTHRIGHTLY DESCRIBING MY OWN BATTLE AGAINST SUICIDE AND THE LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED.

WE NEED TO EDUCATE STUDENTS ABOUT RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS IN FRIENDS, AND THAT IT IS OK TO REPORT CONFIDENCES THAT MAY INDICATE SUICIDAL TENDENCIES IN FRIENDS.

WE ARE STARTING A LINK CREW PROGRAM THIS FALL AT IHS AND HAVE 150 SENIORS TO WORK WITH IN COMING SOPHOMORES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS IS CRUCIAL.

MY DAUGHTER WAS HOSPITALIZED FOR SUICIDAL IDEOLOGY FOUR YEARS AGO AND I SAW NO WARNING SIGNS.

I HAVE DEALT WITH AT LEAST TWO KIDS WHO ATTEMPTED SUICIDE, BOTH OF WHICH WERE HELPED AND THEIR PROBLEMS SOLVED FOR A WHILE.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ARE A FACTOR IN THE YOUTH I WORK WITH, MOST HAVE THIS ISSUE WHEN SUICIDE THOUGHTS APPEAR.

I ALWAYS HAVE THE BELIEF THAT WE NEED TO DO MORE, STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT MUST OCCUR EVERY YEAR.

MORE AWARENESS OF EARLY SIGNS OF NEEDED, DEPRESSION AWARENESS IS NEEDED AT YOUNGER AGES (YOUTH).

A CONCERN WITH ME ALWAYS, WHEN WORKING WITH AT RISK YOUTH.

Q8- Please add any further comments you have regarding youth suicide and its prevention, continued.

DON'T LIKE 'DIVERSITY' LINGO BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT SENDS WRONG MESSAGE OF 'IT'S OKAY TO BE WHO YOU ARE.' NO, IT IS NOT OKAY TO BE SUICIDAL AND DEPRESSED ALL THE TIME.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS TYPE OF TRAINING SHOULD BE OFFERED EVERY YEAR TO TEACHERS JUST TO REMIND US OF HOW VULNERABLE OUR STUDENTS ARE AT THEIR AGE.
STUDENTS SEEM TO LISTEN BEST TO STORIES SHARED BY STUDENTS.
IMPORTANT!

HELPING STUDENTS FEEL SUCCESS AND SEE OPTIONS IS A BIG VALUE OF MINE!

THERE SEEMS TO BE AN ATTITUDE AMONG MANY STUDENTS AND MAYBE STAFF, THAT 'FOOLING AROUND' IN THE FORM OF PUT-DOWNS, HARASSMENT, IS OKAY AS LONG AS 'YOU'RE FRIENDS.' I DON'T THINK IT IS OK.

APPENDIX B

**Control School Sample Disposition
Sample Information Fax
Sample Cover Letter
Questionnaire**

Disposition of Sample—Control Schools

YSPP provided Gilmore Research Group with the names and cities of 18 schools that would provide a rough match to the campaign schools in terms of size, urban/rural mix, high schools and middle schools.

With the exception of North Kitsap High School, each of the schools below was called multiple times in an effort to reach a decision-maker regarding participation in the survey.

A professional Gilmore telephone interviewer, experienced in working with businesses and organizations, placed a call to the principal's office and attempted to speak with or leave a voice message for the principal. In some cases, an assistant was able to speak for the principal. The first contact was to explain the project and ask to send a fax with more information. A follow-up call was made to invite the school's participation and answer any questions. In cases where we had a hard time getting any response to a voice mail, a fax and copy of the questionnaire were both sent to show the nature of the survey questions. Results of the attempts to the 18 schools are shown below.

Cooperated and Accepted Survey Packets

Hoquiam High School: did participate

Shorecrest High School, Shoreline: Made formal application to District, was approved and they did participate

Black River High School, Renton: did participate

West Valley Jr. High, Yakima: did accept packets but none were returned

Contacted, Accepted Fax and Made Request to District, but Unable to get District Okay

Wapato High School

Shadle Park High School, Spokane

Contacted, Accepted Fax, but No Interest in Study

Southridge High School, Kennewick

Foothills Middle School, Wenatchee

Puyallup High School

Pullman High School

Grandview High School

Eatonville High School

Contacted, No Interest, Refused Fax

Mead High School, Spokane

No Response to Voice Message or Assistant's Message, No Response to Fax

Bellingham High School

Bremerton High School

Mountain View Middle School, Spokane

Other

Evergreen High School: Counselor was hopeful, unable to reach principal, sent packets in hope of cooperation, but none were returned

North Kitsap High School, Poulsbo: experienced two suicides in past year; did not call

Fax Letter to School Official on Gilmore Research Letterhead

Faxed after telephone contact and indication of willingness to consider the study.

Date

Name

School

Address/Fax #

Dear _____

Thank you for agreeing to consider our request to have your staff participate in our survey on knowledge and awareness regarding youth suicide. Yours is one of 20 high schools across the state where staff will be participating. Each staff member—teachers, administrators, custodians, cafeteria workers, counselors, bus drivers and everyone—should be invited to participate. It's important to hear from all the various school workers who come into contact with teenagers. The questionnaire WILL NOT ask for any specific information about incidents at your school or among your students.

What we want from you: Distribute the questionnaire packets that we will send to you in March. Each packet has the questionnaire, a cover letter explaining the study, and an addressed postage-paid envelope to return the questionnaire. **The easiest distribution is probably through the regular staff in-house mail system.**

What we want from your staff: Filling out and returning the questionnaire is completely voluntary. We won't ask more than once and we won't have any names, so responses are anonymous.

What we'll give in return: When all the findings are compiled, we'll give you a copy of the findings and let you know the sponsor of the research.

When: The packets of questionnaires will be coming to you in March. Please distribute them as soon as possible. Findings will be back in your hands before the end of the school year.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions about this study, please give me a call during regular business hours at 206-726-5555.

Sincerely,

JoElla M. Weybright
President

Questionnaire Cover Letter on Gilmore Research Letterhead
Enclosed with each questionnaire copy.

February 2003

TO: All staff members, _(name to be filled in)_ School

FROM: Gilmore Research Group, Seattle, WA

You are being invited to participate in a brief study of knowledge and opinions related to suicide among youth. Our client is interested in learning how people in school settings deal with the critical issue of potential suicide with youth.

Please take just a few moments to answer the questions on the enclosed one-page questionnaire. Use the postage-paid envelope to mail it back to us.

We do not want your name. Your answers will be anonymous. If you don't want to answer a question, just skip over it. Even if you don't have a lot of direct contact with the students, your opinions are very important to us.

Your **participation is entirely voluntary, but we hope you will be interested** in sharing your experiences and opinions.

If you have any questions, please call Meredith Wisti at 206-219-1920.

P.S. We'll send your principal a copy of the report when our study is complete. It will summarize responses from about 20 schools around the state, and the identity of the sponsor will be clear at that time.

SUICIDE AMONG YOUTH

You are an important link with the students at your school. You may see them in the classroom, in the cafeteria, at school activities or just on the grounds or moving through the halls. You have a chance to observe and to interact with these students, giving you the opportunity to be there for a young person when help is needed. Please answer all the questions below the best you can.

1. Please name several warning signs of suicide in teenagers

2. If you saw or had contact with a teen who exhibited signs of being suicidal, what would you do?

3. Where is your comfort level in dealing directly with a teen who is suicidal? Circle one number below to indicate your current feeling. You may circle 1 for “lowest level,” 10 for “highest level” or any number in between.

Would feel totally inadequate to step in and help anyone										Would feel totally capable that I could be of help to a youth in that situation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

4. Are you aware of any suicide awareness or prevention efforts in your school within the past two years, whether you participated in those efforts or not?

No Yes ↗

If so, please explain: _____

5. Have you, yourself, ever had any suicide prevention training?

No Yes ↗

If so, please explain: _____

6. Check one category that best describes the work you do at the school.

Certified (teacher, administrator, counselor, etc.)

Classified (support staff, custodial staff, etc.)

Other (specify): _____

7. How long have you been employed at this school? Check one

One year or less

Two-five years

Over five years

Please add any further comments you have regarding youth suicide and its prevention.
