



Ursuline Academy

March 2, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of the Ursuline Academy Community,

The adolescent years are marked by a number of different stressors and challenges that can pile up for any student. It can be easy to misread potential warning signs and other mental health challenges as normal adolescent turmoil; however, these things are occurring with increasing frequency in individuals who are school age. When suicide the second leading cause of death for youth and young adults between the ages of 10 and 24, Ursuline is committed to addressing this situation as part of our focus on student wellness.

Samaritans, Inc. of Boston will be collaborating with Ursuline Academy to host a number of workshops for all students during their guidance classes. This means that each student will attend an age appropriate workshop in early April on mental health and suicide prevention, allowing students to learn both information and skills in a clear way.

The goals of the Samaritans workshops are:

- To inform students about the Samaritans' 24-hour helpline as a resource for all individuals to call or text for any reason.
- To review the prevalence of suicide, and discuss risk factors and warning signs related to suicide.
- To begin to develop a skill set that includes judgment-free listening, open-ended question asking, validations, and asking directly about suicide
- To encourage students to get help from adults that they trust if they are faced with a situation that may be life threatening.
- To review self-care with the Samaritans' workshop facilitator as a way to cope with the stresses of student and adolescent life.

After this presentation, students will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire about their experience with the content provided by Samaritans. We find that offering this tool allows any students who wish to speak to the guidance department regarding the topics at hand to initiate that process.

This letter is to inform you of our intent to host these workshops in the upcoming weeks with all students at Ursuline Academy, and to invite you to attend a Parent Night in which a similar presentation will be hosted by the Samaritans. At the Parent Night, you will see the content your students will see beforehand, allowing you to prepare for any questions or conversation that may come up with your daughters after the workshop. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to chat with the Samaritans' team to get your questions answered from the same group that will be offering this material to your student(s). **This Parent Night will be on Tuesday March 24th at 6:30pm in Angela Hall and we would ask that at least one parent /guardian from every family attend.** (We also extend this invitation to any adult you feel would like to come.) Please RSVP mferrucci@ursulineacademy.net your attendance so we may plan appropriately.

If you wish to opt your daughter out of this workshop, please email mferrucci@ursulineacademy.net to indicate this. If we have not heard from you by one week prior to workshop date, we will assume your child is cleared to attend the suicide prevention workshop hosted by Samaritans.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or comments. Furthermore, if you wish to connect with Kendra McDonald, Samaritans' Manager for Community Education and Outreach, you may do so by email at kmcdonald@samaritanshope.org.

Please know that we have met with Kendra and her team and have vetted every aspect of their program. The Samaritans program is highly regarded and respected and will address each grade level in an age appropriate small group format.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Mrs. Mary Reardon Ferrucci
Director of School/College Counseling

Additional Resources:

[Samaritans, Inc. of Boston](#)

[Center for Disease Control & Suicide Prevention](#)

[Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#)

[American Psychological Association: Talking to Teens about Suicide](#)

[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Teens and Suicide Parent Guide](#)