

# Welcome to SPRC's Research to Practice Webinar

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*Sources of Strength: Preventing Suicide among High School Students through Peer Leadership and Adult Mentoring*

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Expand control panel



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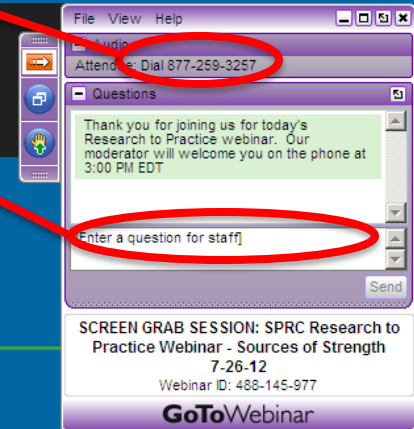
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**Enter question during Q&A**



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# Today's Presenters



**Mark LoMurray**



**Diane Rosaldo**



**Laura Rundell**



**Peter Wyman, PhD**



# SOURCES OF STRENGTH USING PEER LEADERS TO CHANGE SOCIAL NORMS

A National Wellness Program Impacting  
Suicide and Bully Prevention

Mark LoMurray

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[WWW.SOURCESOFSTRENGTH.ORG](http://WWW.SOURCESOFSTRENGTH.ORG)



1. STARTED IN 1998 IN RURAL /TRIBAL MENTAL HEALTH SHORTAGE AREAS
2. RECEIVED 2005 APHA - EPI SECTION - NAT. PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE AWARD
3. 2006 BEGAN WORKING WITH U OF ROCHESTER ON GA, NY, AND ND HIGH SCHOOL TRIAL
4. 2009 ON SPRC BEST PRACTICES REGISTRY AND BEGAN PARTNERING ON NIMH 5 YEAR STUDY
5. 2012 ON SAMSHA'S NREPP LIST
6. ALASKA TO GEORGIA - CANADA - STANFORD/U OF MANITOBA WITH DR. WYMAN

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH PROCESS



1. School-Community-Administration Buy-in
2. Protocol Review
3. Identify and train key Adult advisors/coordinators (4-6 hrs)
4. Recruit and train diverse peer leaders (3-6 hrs)
5. PL and AA Planning and Action Step Phase (Hope, Help, Strength, Messaging)
6. Evaluate and expand for year 2-3 efforts

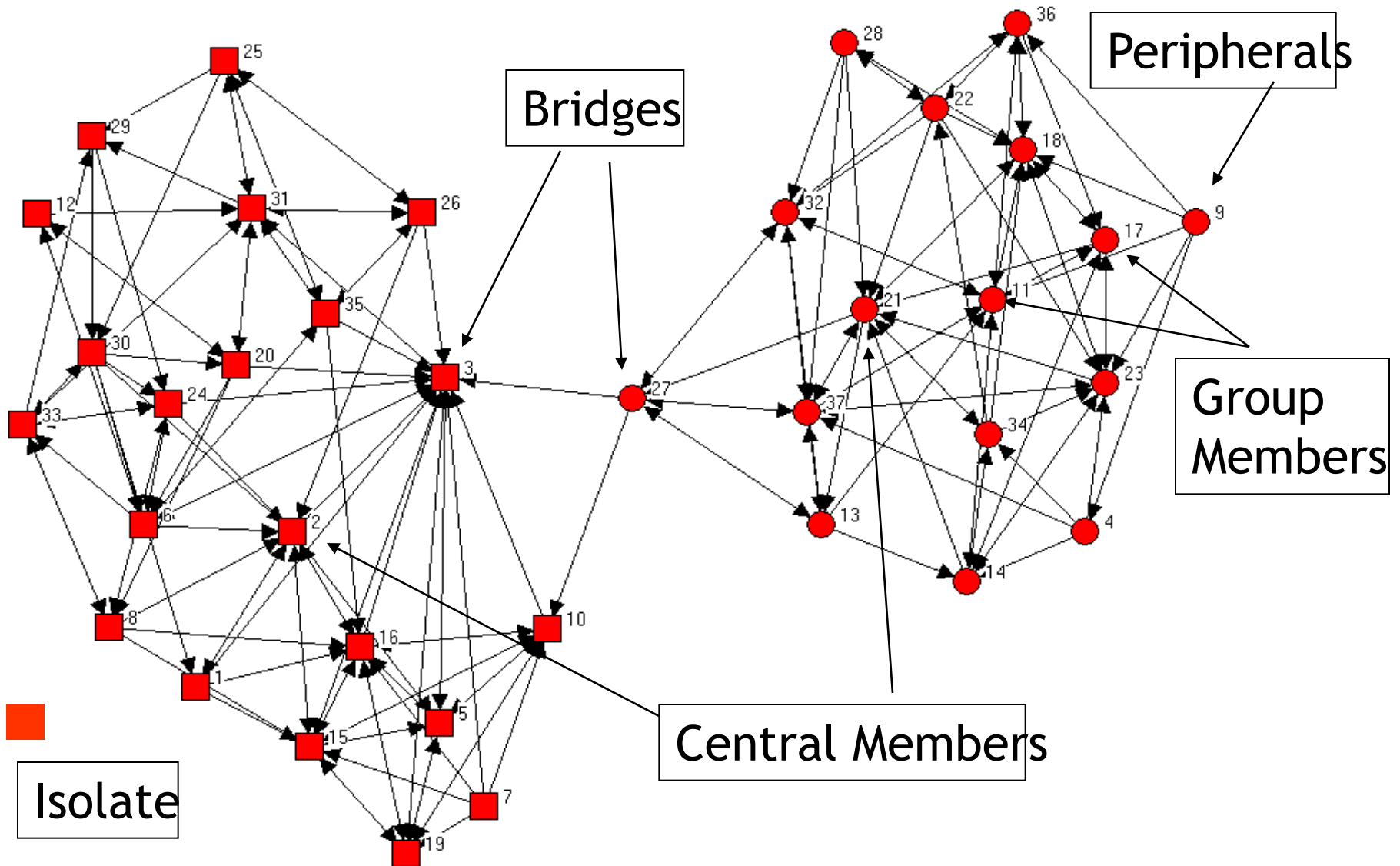
# SOURCES OF STRENGTH

*THE MORE YOU HAVE,  
THE BETTER YOU CAN HANDLE LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS .*





# SOCIAL NETWORKS



# CORE COMPONENTS



1. Hope, Help, Strength messaging strategies
2. Diversity of peer leaders to spread into many cliques and groups.
3. Brings together peer leaders and adult supports for prevention power
4. **INTERACTIVE, PERSONALIZED MESSAGES, NAMING PROCESS**

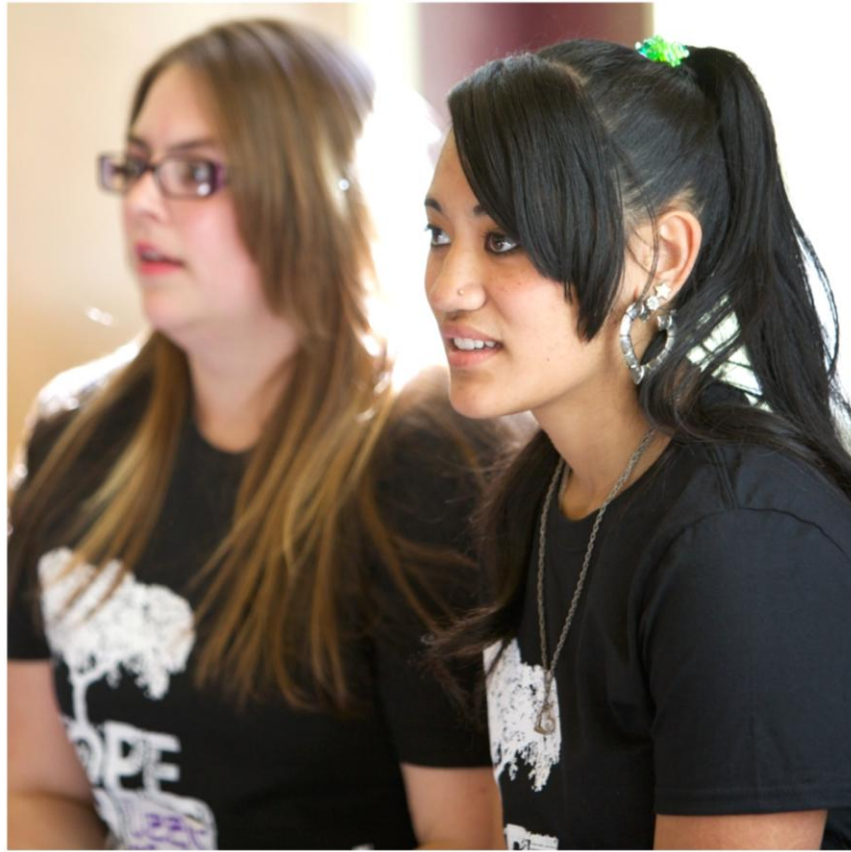


Mentors

Helpers -  
Mediators

Sources of  
Strength

# SOURCES OF STRENGTH A MULTI-YEAR GROWTH PROCESS



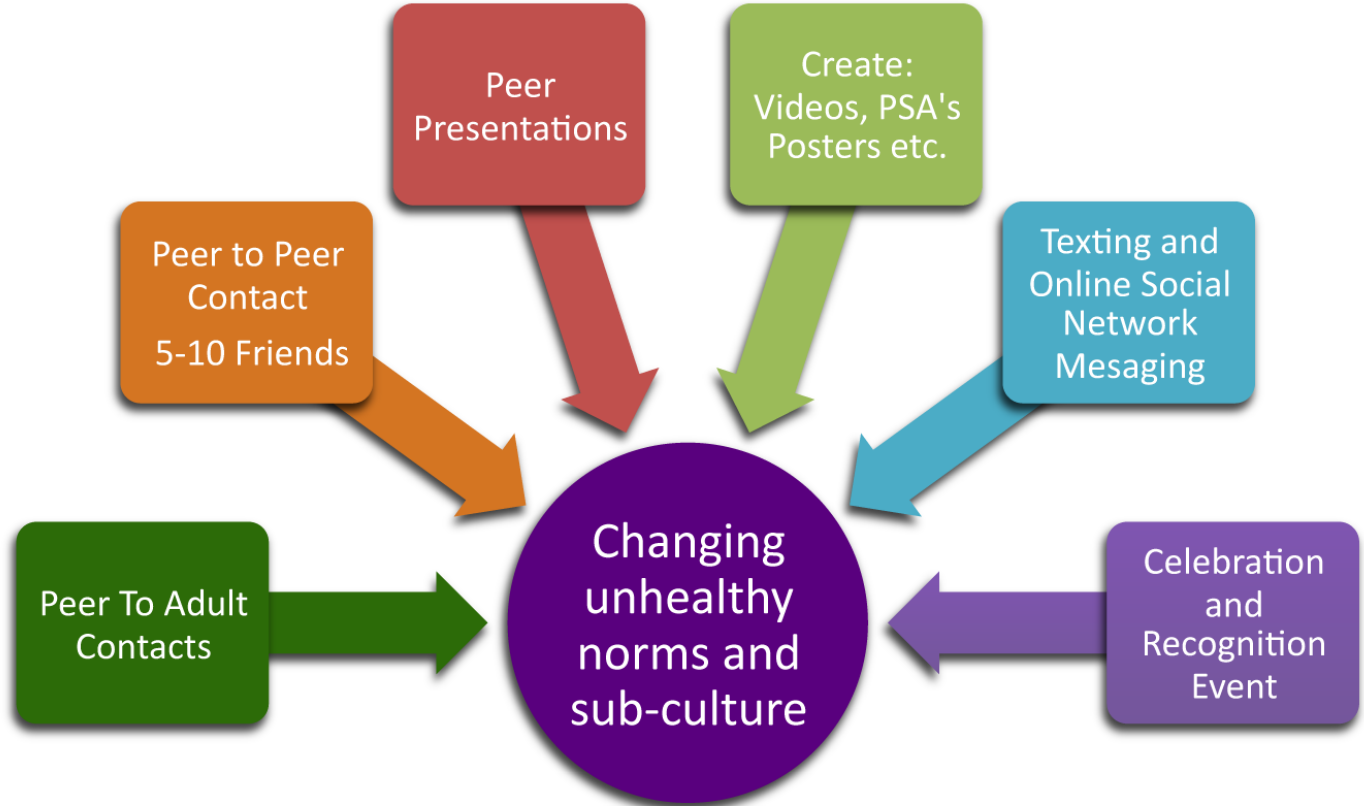
Each year peer leaders and coordinators come together for training (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 curriculum)

Year 1 typically has PL's engaged in 3-5 messaging activities - getting their feet wet

Year 2 often adds more diversity for PL's - begin to really get concepts and add creativity

Year 3 - broad spread, partnering with many other student groups, become very creative at reaching groups, saturating campus/community with messages

Well Aware™



# CHANGING NORMS - NAMING AND PUBLIC DISPLAY OF MENTORS- ROLE MODELS - TRUSTED ADULTS



# BE AWARE OF UNINTENDED HARM



- Shock and trauma stories
- Using data that creates unhealthy social norms
- Simplistic linking of behaviors - bully and suicide
- Media stories focusing on death (Military suicides)
- Billboard campaigns - adolescents with SI less likely to seek help



Diane Rosaldo  
CETPA -  
Heroes Peer Leader







# Part of Heroes at CETPA



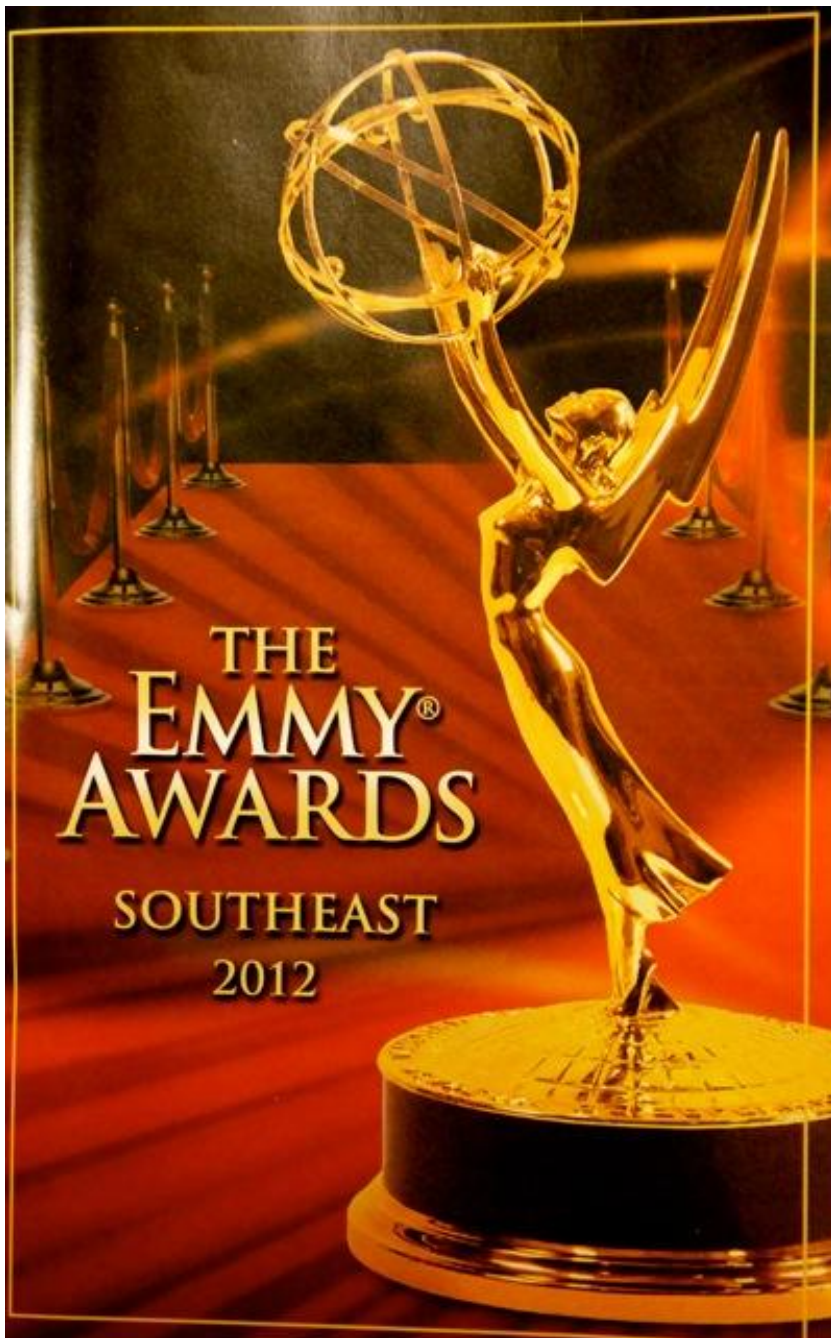
Helping out  
in the  
community



**Kids at CETPA**



# Filming a PSA



# South Eastern Regional Emmys

Q&A

# It all starts with training day



Teachers nominate students they think would be good leaders. These students attend a half day training to learn about Sources of Strength and meet all the other peer leaders

# They come from all different social circles in the school



and spend time  
playing many silly  
games that help  
create an  
unforgettable  
experience and a  
bond that lasts  
throughout the year





# The shoe game

Getting to know each other



Team Work!!



Circle Time



Partner activities



# Getting down to business

- Peer leaders get together in groups and think about all the sources of strength they have around them
- This helps these students realize how they use these supports without even thinking about it everyday and especially during tough times



Peer leaders begin to grasp the concept of what 'strengths' in their lives are which helps equip them to teach other students in the school

# Getting deeper

After hearing examples, peer leaders dive deeper by personalizing how they have used one of the 8 Sources of Strength to get through a tough time



# Practice

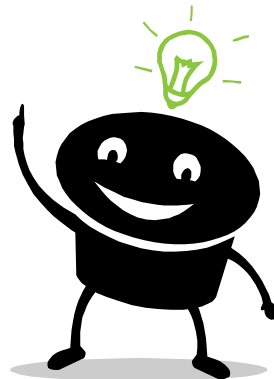
- Peer leaders share their stories in front the large groups both as a demonstration of what they have learned about Sources of Strength but also as a practice for re-telling their story later to a friend that might need to hear it in a time of need



# Our ideas



- Together the groups generate lists of things they could do to teach others about Sources of Strength and reach as many of their peers as possible!

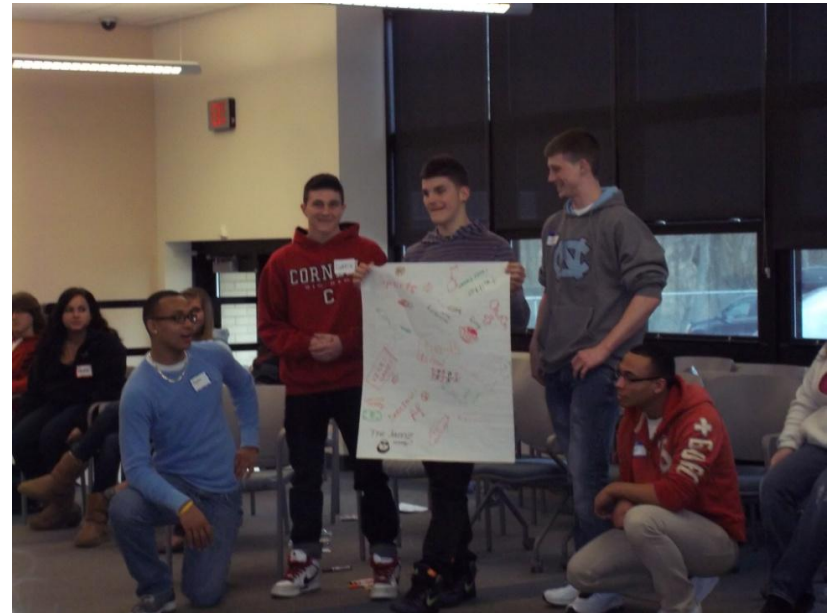


# Planning with purpose



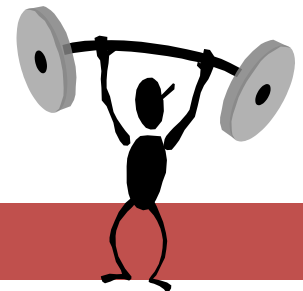
# Presenting and thinking ahead

- The peer leaders take turns presenting all the creative ideas they have for the upcoming year and all the things they would like to accomplish.
- This step helps the excitement grow and get's everyone hopeful about all the positive activities and changes they could create in their own school



# At the end of the training

- Peer leaders name a person in the school and a person outside of school as a “trusted adult,” someone they could go to if they were ever having a hard time or a friend was.
- In a circle the whole group and day of training comes together as the peer leaders think about people in their life that they rely on and could go to if they ever needed to



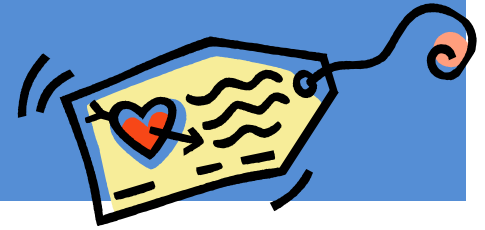
Very powerful!



# Keeping the momentum going....

- Once the training is over, the new peer leaders need to fulfill required action steps.
- It all starts with the peer leaders going to the trusted adult they named and telling them in person that they named them as someone they could always go to.
- It's a very powerful experience for both the student and the one finding out that they have been named.

# Tag, you're it...



Students start spreading the message around the school by trying to reach as many people as they can with the SOS message



Naming trusted adults!

# Peer teaching and activities come to life

Dances  
Bake Sales  
Sports  
Volunteering



The "Same Page" project



Sources of Strength Spirit Week



School Wide Assemblies



Suicide Prevention Walk

Concerts, carnivals, student/staff games

**Q&A**



## **Research to Evaluate Sources of Strength: Program Impact and Messaging**

*Peter A Wyman, PhD, U Rochester*  
*C. Hendricks Brown, PhD, U Miami*  
*Mark LoMurray, Sources of Strength*  
*Mariya Petrova, U Rochester*

# Current State of Youth Suicide Prevention

- Nearly all current programs focus on identifying and referring for treatment suicidal or highly at risk youth (e.g., screening, gatekeeper training)
- Won't address needs of many youth:
  - Mental health services not accessible or acceptable for many
  - Some suicidal behavior impulsive –not identifiable beforehand
  - Few public health problems solved by focusing only on endpoint
- Sources of Strength expands suicide prevention focus
  - Changes risk/protective factors in population of high school
  - Social-ecological: Individual in systems (peers, adults, school)
  - Prevent new instances of suicidal behavior

# **Social-Ecological Factors Well-Established Influence on Youth Suicide Risk**

**Possibly More During Adolescence than  
Other Periods of Life**

# Social-Ecological Risk-Protective Factors

## Illustrative Examples

- **Peer Suicidal Behavior**
- Peer suicide attempt among strongest risk factors for attempt (Bearman & Moody 2004)
- Suicide in social group increases risk at rate 2-4 times higher in teens than other groups, likely by 'acceptability' of suicide (Gould 1990)
- **Bullying Experience**
- Bullies and victims of bullying at higher risk for suicidal behavior (Gould et al., 2003)
- **Positive Peer Connections**
- Ties to peers (particularly for girls) and being part of school with dense social ties (particularly for boys) reduces risk for SA (Bearman & Moody 2004)
- **Connectedness to Adults**
- Teens with positive connection to their schools and perceived closeness to parents are at lower risk for suicide attempts (Borowsky 1999, 2001)



# Rationale for Peer Involvement in Suicide Prevention

- Primary influence on whether a teenager uses safe sex practices?
  - **Beliefs about what his/her friends would do**  
(Kirby, 2002)
- Peer Norms influence drug use, risk-taking, other health behaviors
- **Peer involvement is state-of-art in substance use prevention not yet in suicide prevention**
- **Large potential to modify social-ecological factors**

# Caution Points on Peer Involvement

- Grouping teens with antisocial norms may reinforce those norms (Tom Dishion's work)
- Can the 'message' be separated from the 'messenger'?
  - A peer-led, effective substance use prevention program had negative effects delivered by substance using teens (Valente et al 2007)
- **Sources of Strength trial examined potential negative effects on high-risk groups (peer leaders and suicidal youth in schools)**

# First Evaluation of Sources of Strength Using Randomized Wait-Listed Design

- 18 high schools (Georgia, New York, North Dakota)
- All Schools receive full Sources of Strength intervention
- Randomized to : Immediate or Wait-listed for 5 months
- Acceptable to communities/schools and possible to draw strong conclusions and program impact
- Tested effects on changing population norms/practices;
- Not large enough to test impact on suicidal behavior

Funded by SAMHSA, NIMH, NY State

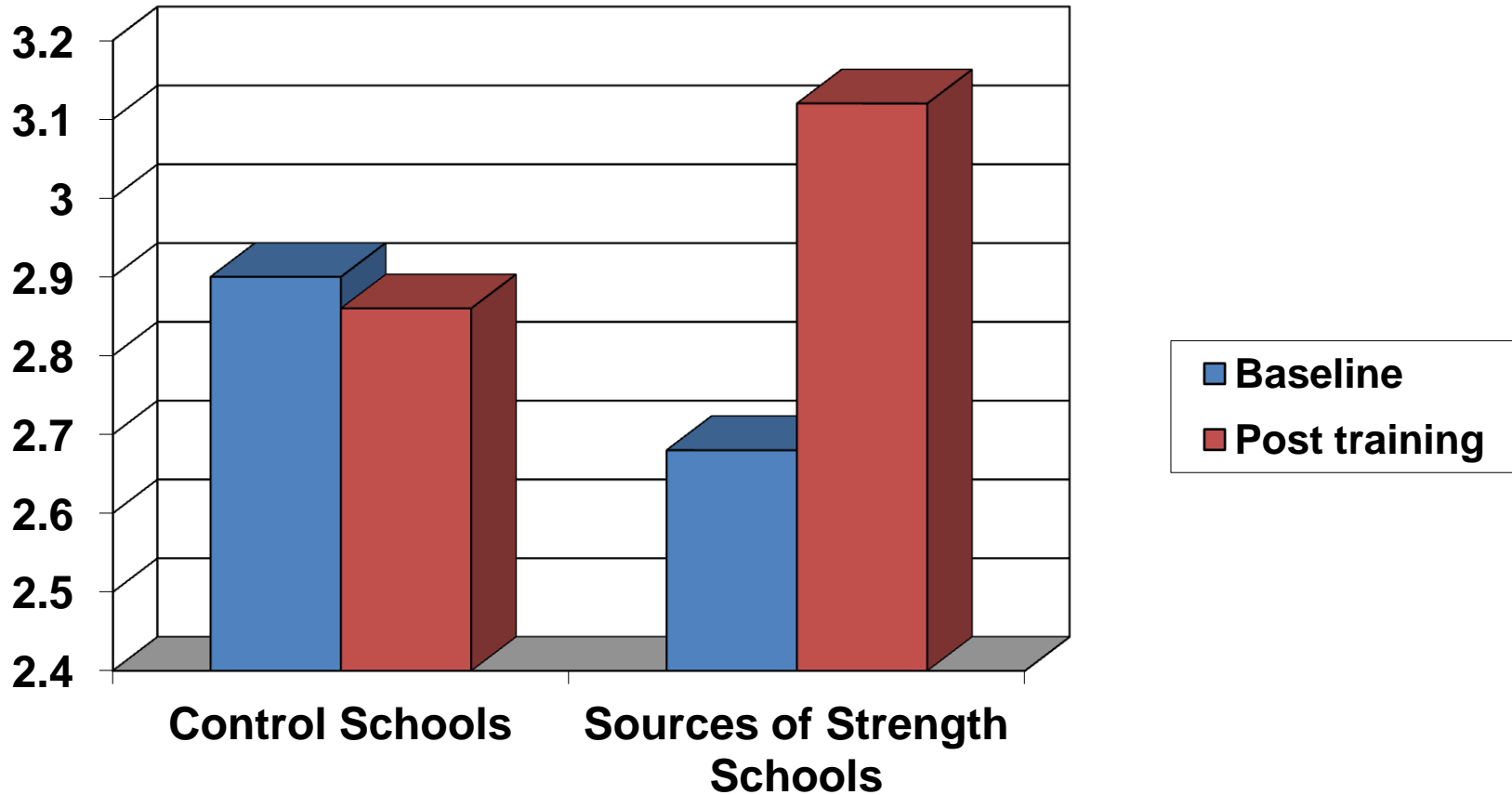
# Trial Design

- Baseline and 5-month Follow-up Assessments:
  - 465 Student 'Peer Leaders
  - 2,675 Students Surveys, from stratified random sampling of population
  - Multi-level Modeling: School Unit of Randomization

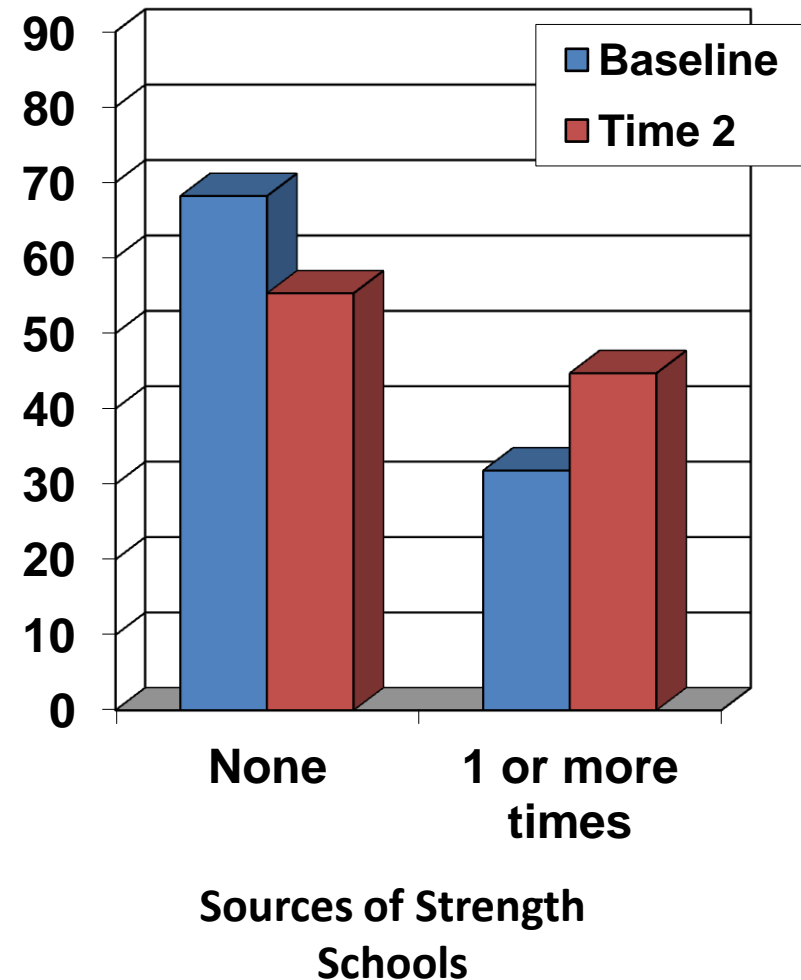
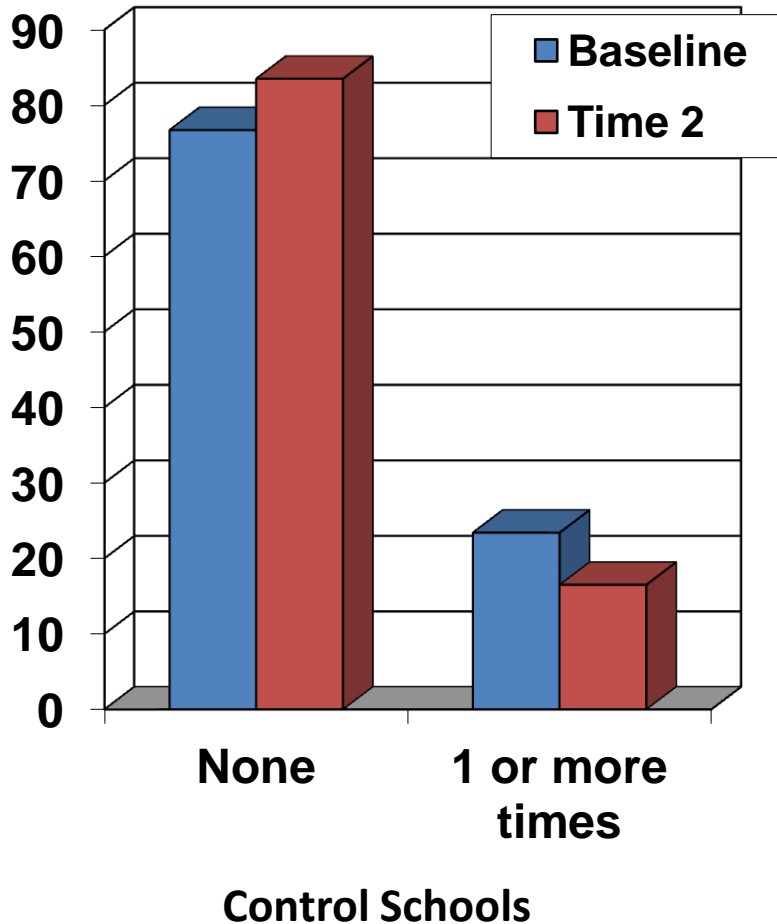
# Sources of Strength Increased Peer Leader Connectedness and Norms for Handling Suicide

Effect Size on Student Peer Leaders		Low	Med	High
<b><i>SUICIDE NORMS</i></b>				
Help for Suicidal Peers			<b>0.75</b>	
Reject Codes of Silence		<b>0.34</b>		
<b><i>CONNECTEDNESS</i></b>				
Help Seeking from Adults			<b>0.62</b>	
Sources of Strength Coping			<b>0.44</b>	
Trusted Adults			<b>0.49</b>	
Support to Peers		<b>0.34</b>		

# Help-Seeking Norms of Peer Leaders increased ( $p < .05$ )

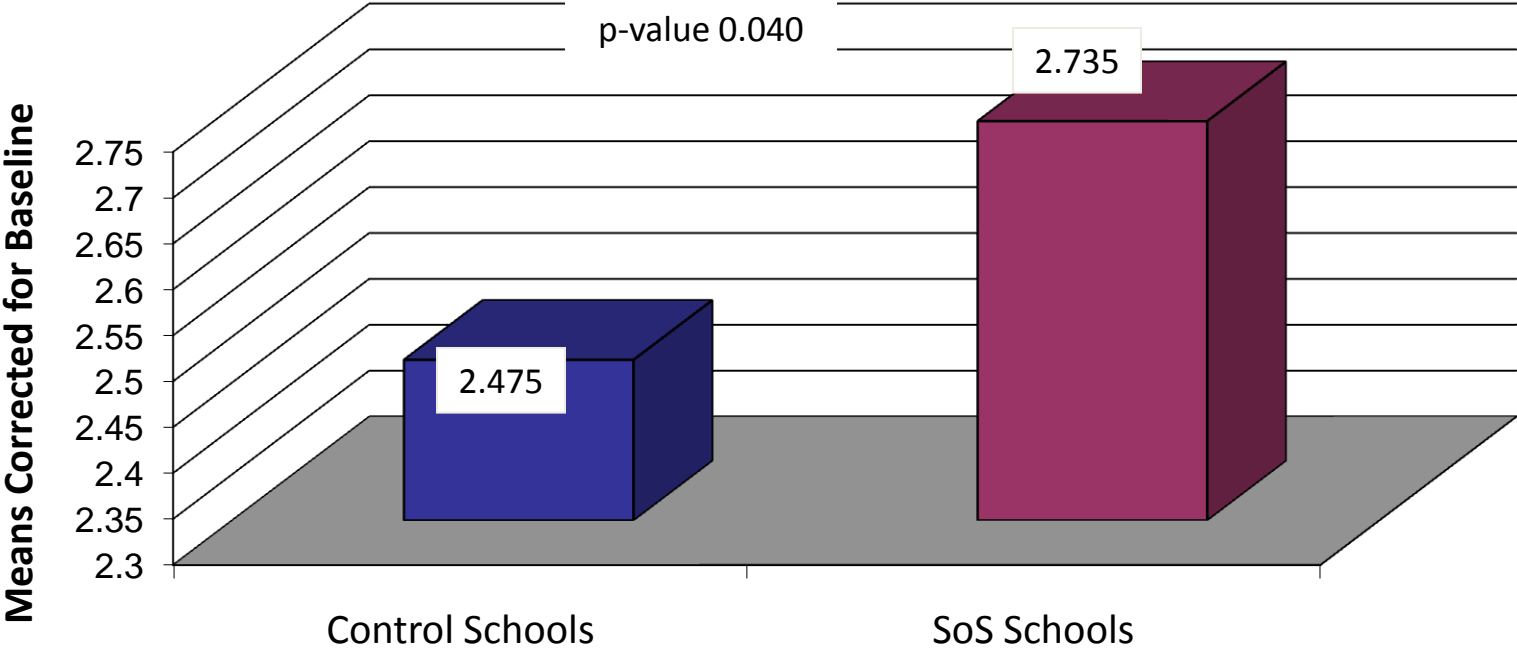


# Referred a Suicidal Peer to Adults: 4-fold increase by training in larger schools ( $p < .05$ )



**TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION**

**Help Seeking Acceptance increased after 4-months of Peer Leader Messaging**

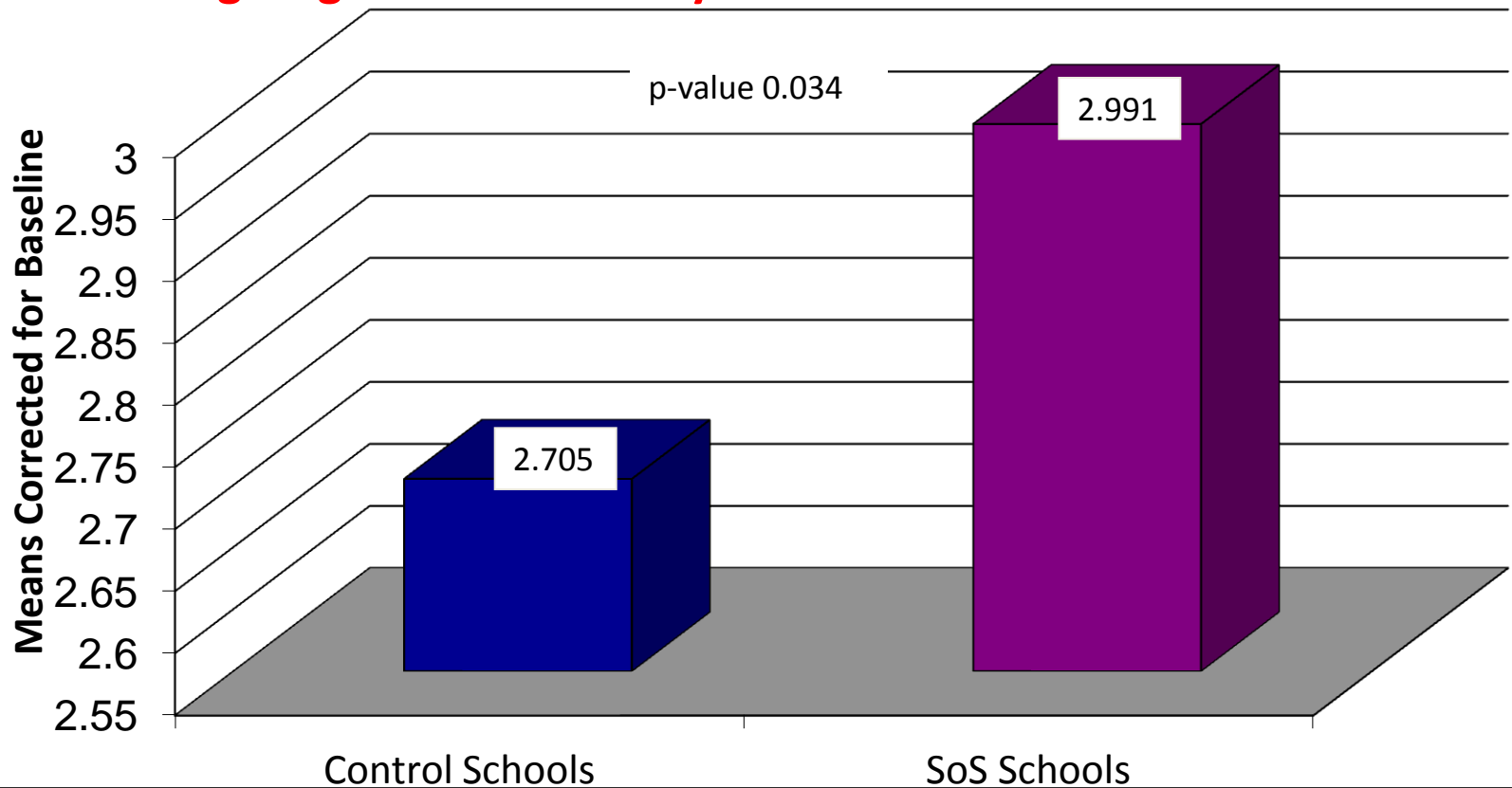




## TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION

Adults Help Suicidal Youth increased by PLs –

**Largest gains for suicidal youth**



# Sources of Strength Impact After 5 months of Peer Leader Messaging

- Student Peer leaders can safely implement suicide prevention messaging with adult support.
- Increased Peer Leaders' help-seeking norms, reduces 'codes of silence' – most improvements for less connected teens
- Peer Leaders refer more suicidal peers to adults (primarily in larger schools), unlike adult gatekeeper training (Wyman, Brown 2008)
- Positive norm changes spread to other students, improving norms for suicide coping, with largest benefits for suicidal teens.
- *Wyman, Brown, et al., (2010) American Journal Public Health*

# Implications

- Sources of Strength one of only a handful of high school-based suicide prevention programs showing positive impact on risk and protective factors associated with suicide through rigorous research design.
- A critical next step is to evaluate this model further in terms of impact on suicidal behaviors – We have underway a randomized trial with 36 high schools (NIMH-funded).
- For public health impact and potential uptake by communities, critical to evaluate effects on a broader array of risk and protective process such as bullying, school engagement and retention.

# Suicide Prevention Messaging

## Second Area of Research:

- What Makes Peer Leader Messaging Effective to Reach High-Risk Youth?
- How Can Messaging Impact be Strengthened?
  - *\*\*A recent study found that PSAs showing depressed faces and encouraging seeing doctor reduced help-seeking acceptance for suicidal teens (Klimes-Dougan et al., 2009)*
  - *'Fear appeals' may reinforce hopelessness*

# Most Suicide Prevention Messaging focused on Negative Consequences – What Alternatives?

"MR. GREEN. IN THE BATHROOM. WITH THE RAZOR BLADE"

CLUE # 2:

EVERYDAY, MORE THAN 11 PEOPLE UNDER THE AGE OF 24 TAKE THEIR OWN LIFE.

Recent studies show that suicide is the third ranking cause of death for American youth, just behind homicide. Protecting your child should be a parent's number one priority, even if it means protecting them from themselves.

Studies prove that children who are exposed to youth suicide prevention programs and help training are significantly less likely to attempt suicide, and more likely to report incidents of suicidal behavior.

Simply learning how to read the signs can save a life. Learn how you can help others by visiting the Youth Suicide Prevention Program online at [www.yspp.org](http://www.yspp.org). Help protect America's youth, because suicide is not a game.

**YSPP**  
Youth Suicide Prevention Program

FEELING LOST, LONELY, DESPARATE?  
HAVING THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE?  
**HELP AVAILABLE**  
Talk to someone. There IS hope.  
If you or someone you know is in emotional distress or thinking about suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:  
**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**  
With HELP comes HOPE.

**NHS**

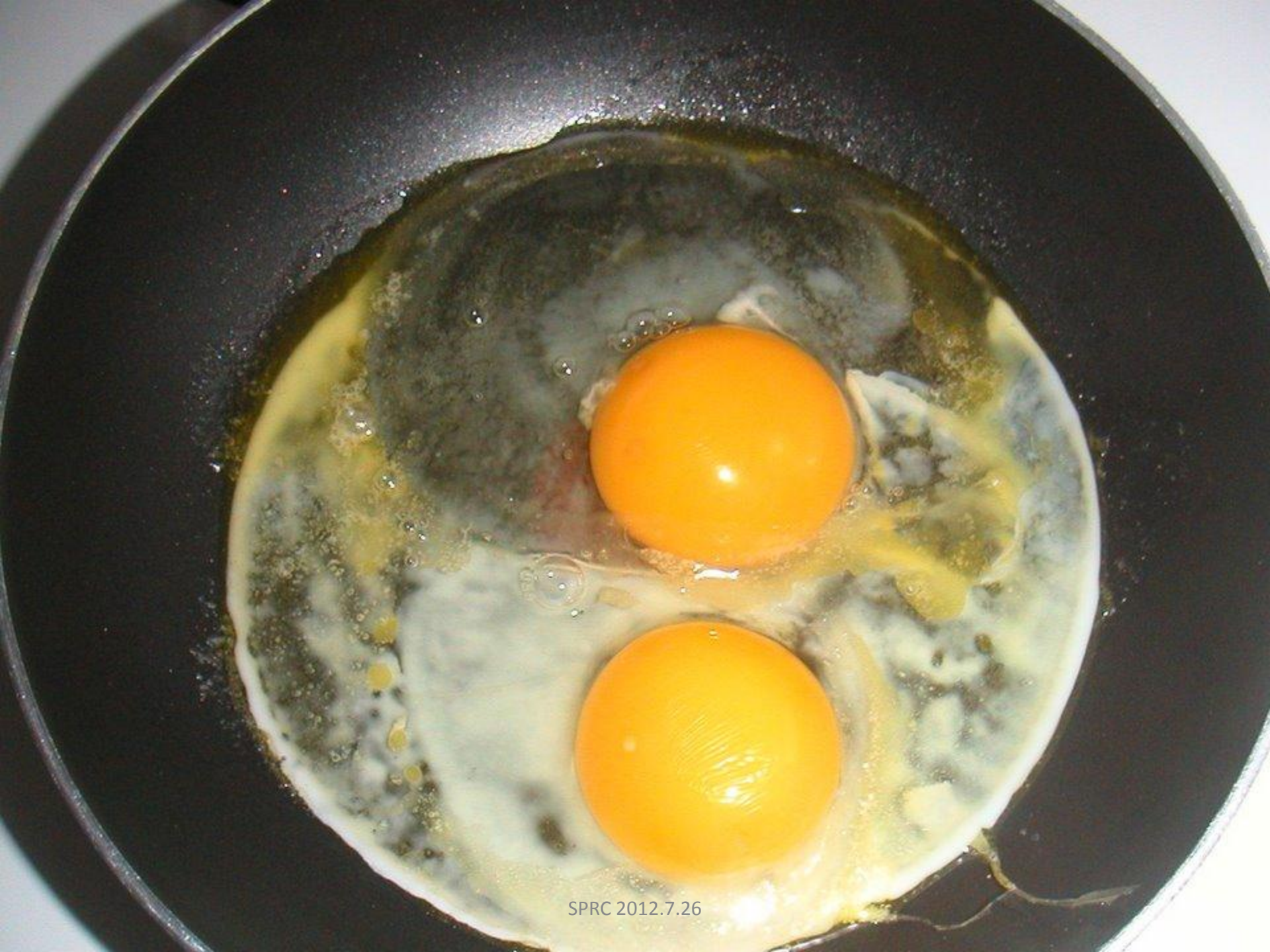
Do other people feel this bad?

**DON'T STAY SILENT...**  
It's not just you. Everyone will either experience mental health problems or know someone who will at some point in their lives. Got a question relating to mental health? [Youthspace](http://youthspace.me) can offer help and advice on whatever it is you may be going through.

[www.youthspace.me](http://www.youthspace.me)

Widening & Improving Mental Health Foundation Trust. Supported by NHS UK - CLAHRC

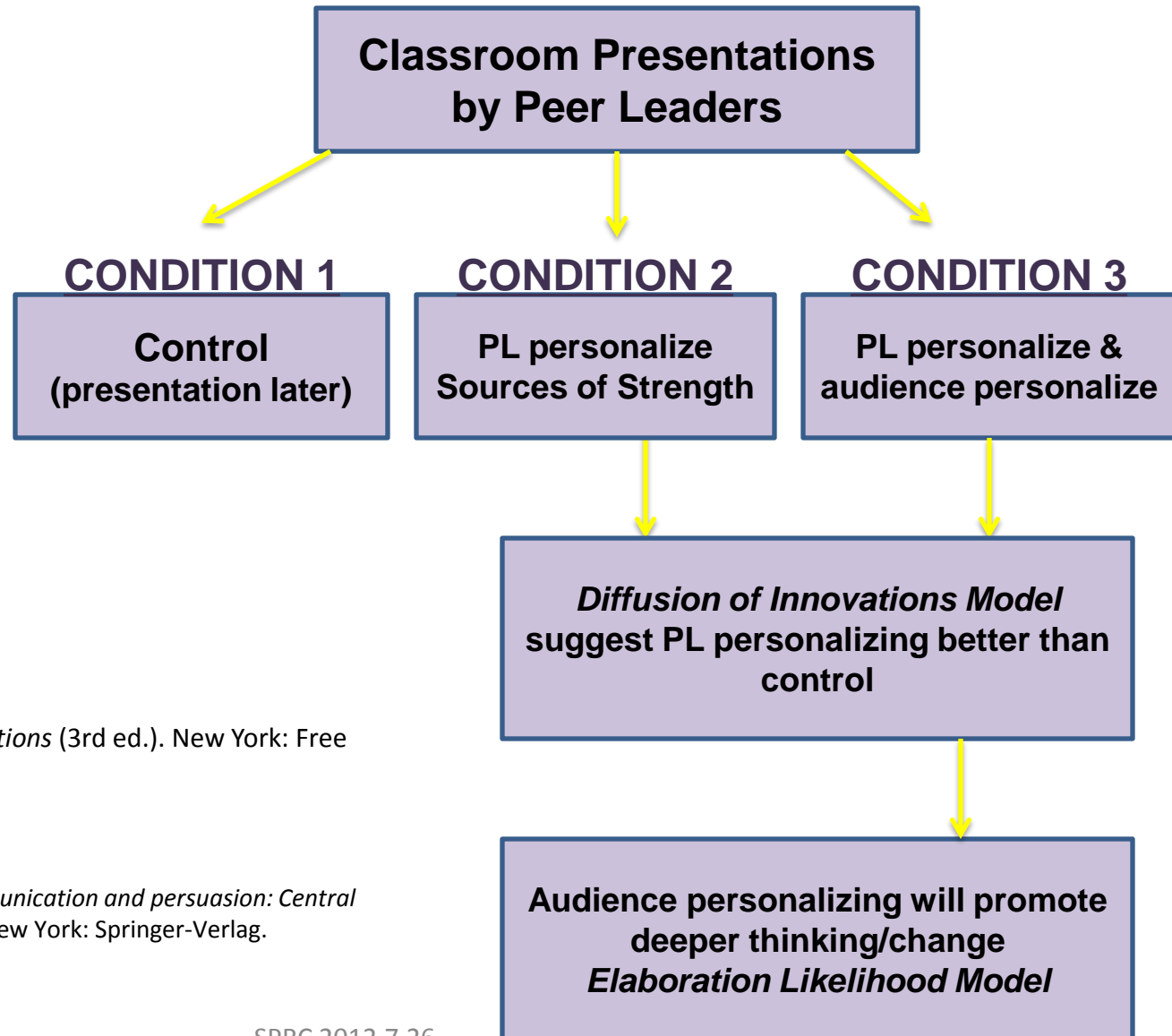
**YOUTH SPACE**



SPRC 2012.7.26

# Sources of Strength Messaging study

- 706 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students
- In 4 NY High Schools
- 36 Classes randomized w/in school
- Students surveyed after exposure

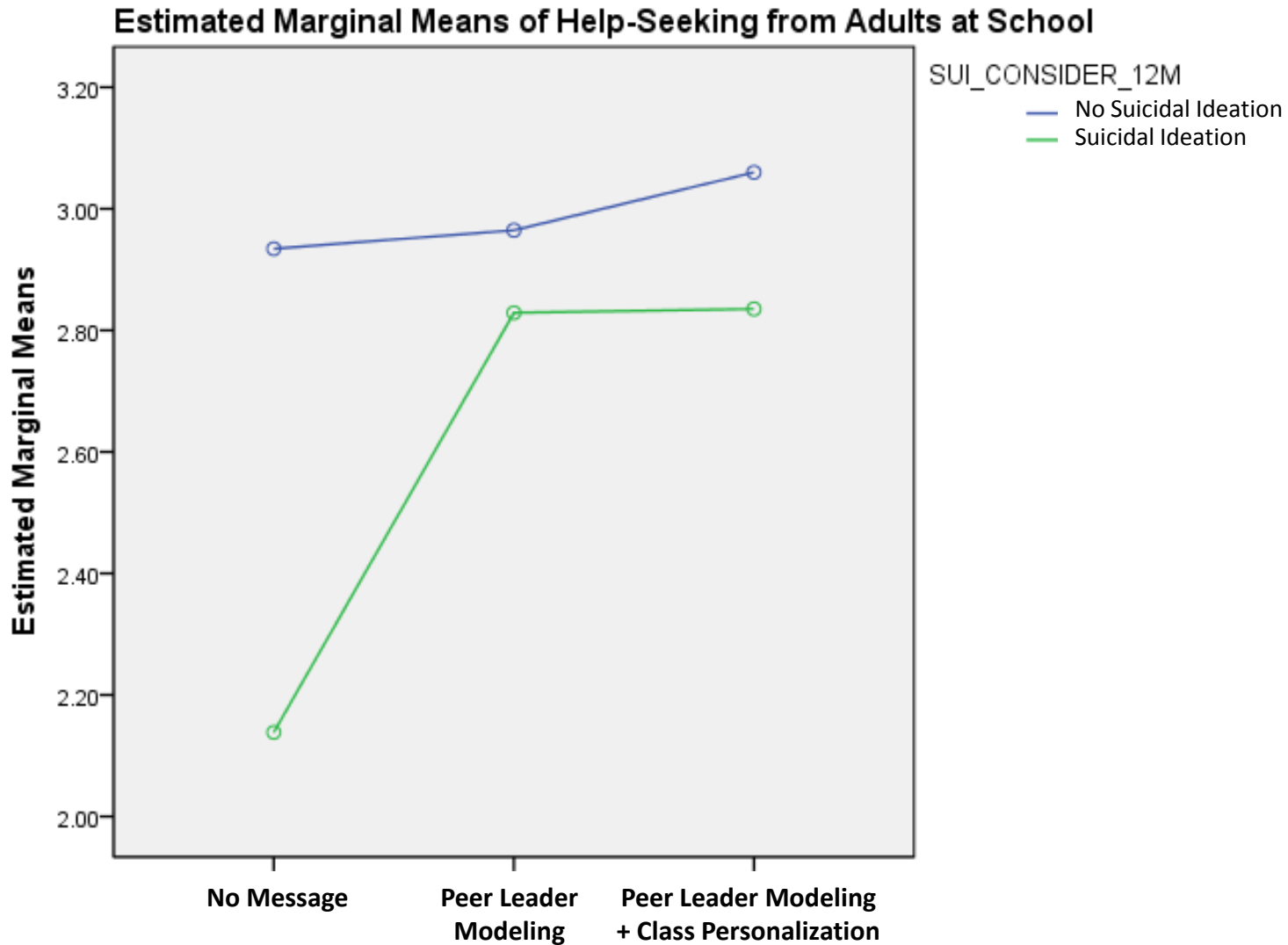


Rogers, E. M. (1983). *Diffusion of innovations* (3rd ed.). New York: Free Press.

## Elaboration Likelihood Model

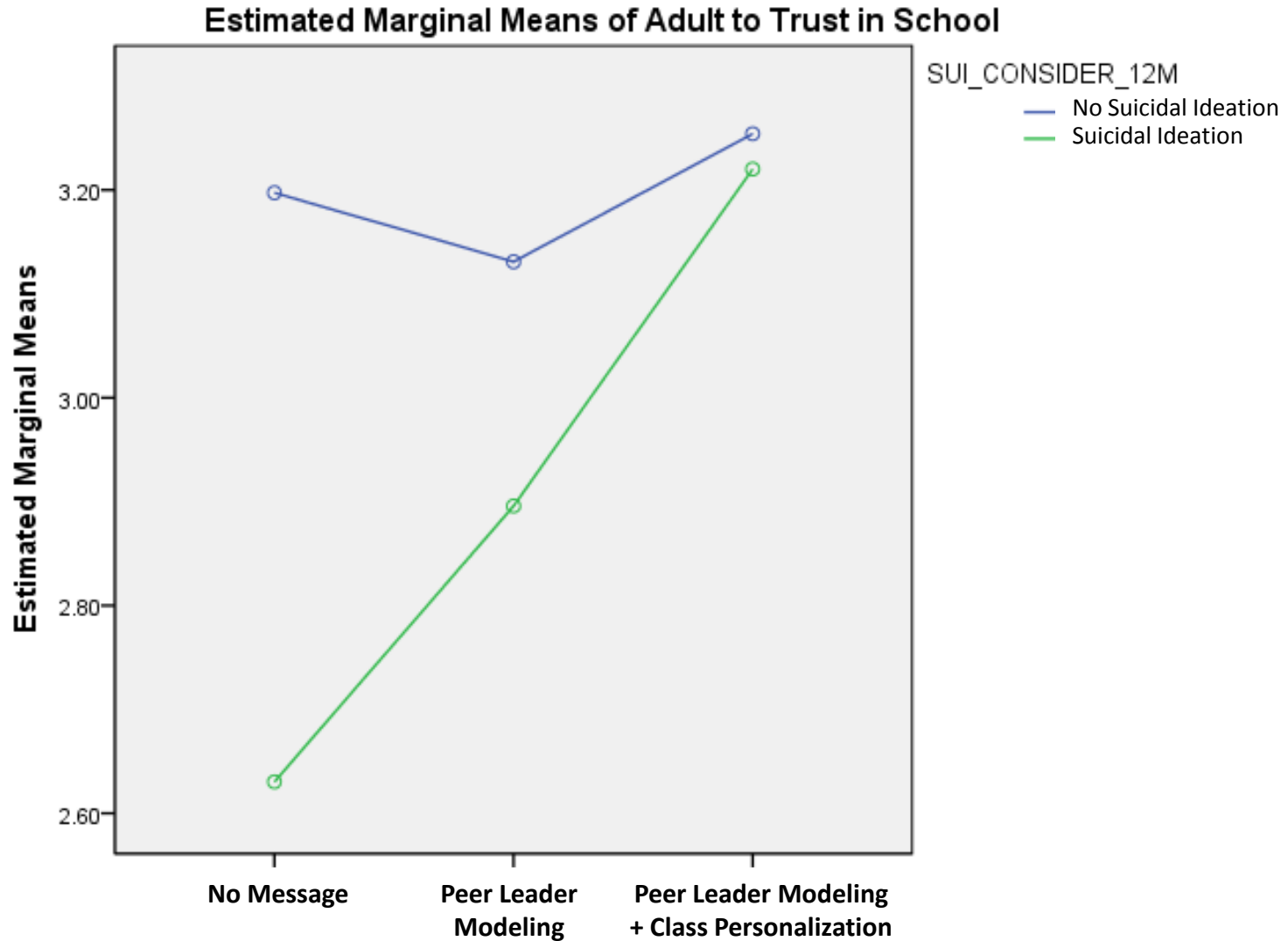
Petty, R. E. and Cacioppo, J. T. (1986) *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

# Largest Gains in Help Seeking Norms: Students in Classroom w/ Suicide Ideation (SI)





# Largest Gains in Naming Trusted Adults: Students w/ SI in Personalizing Condition



# Conclusions About Peer Leader Messaging

- Peer Leader modeling of positive coping increased short-term norms about help-seeking in classrooms – consistent with a social learning model
- Positive messaging had greatest effect for suicidal students
- Active involvement of students increased impact
- **Reinforces Sources of Strength's approach on strengthening norms for positive coping and help-seeking through peer messaging**
- **Sources of Strength programs should include projects that engage other students actively**

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# Q&A

**Thank you!**

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