

# Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Health Education

Brian Griffith

Health Education Specialist

Maryland State Department of Education

# Objectives

- **Introduce participants to Health Education requirements in Maryland**
- **Introduce participants to the Health Education Voluntary State Curriculum (VSC)**
- **Correlate the VSC with suicide awareness and prevention**
- **Demonstrate a suicide prevention activity**

# COMAR

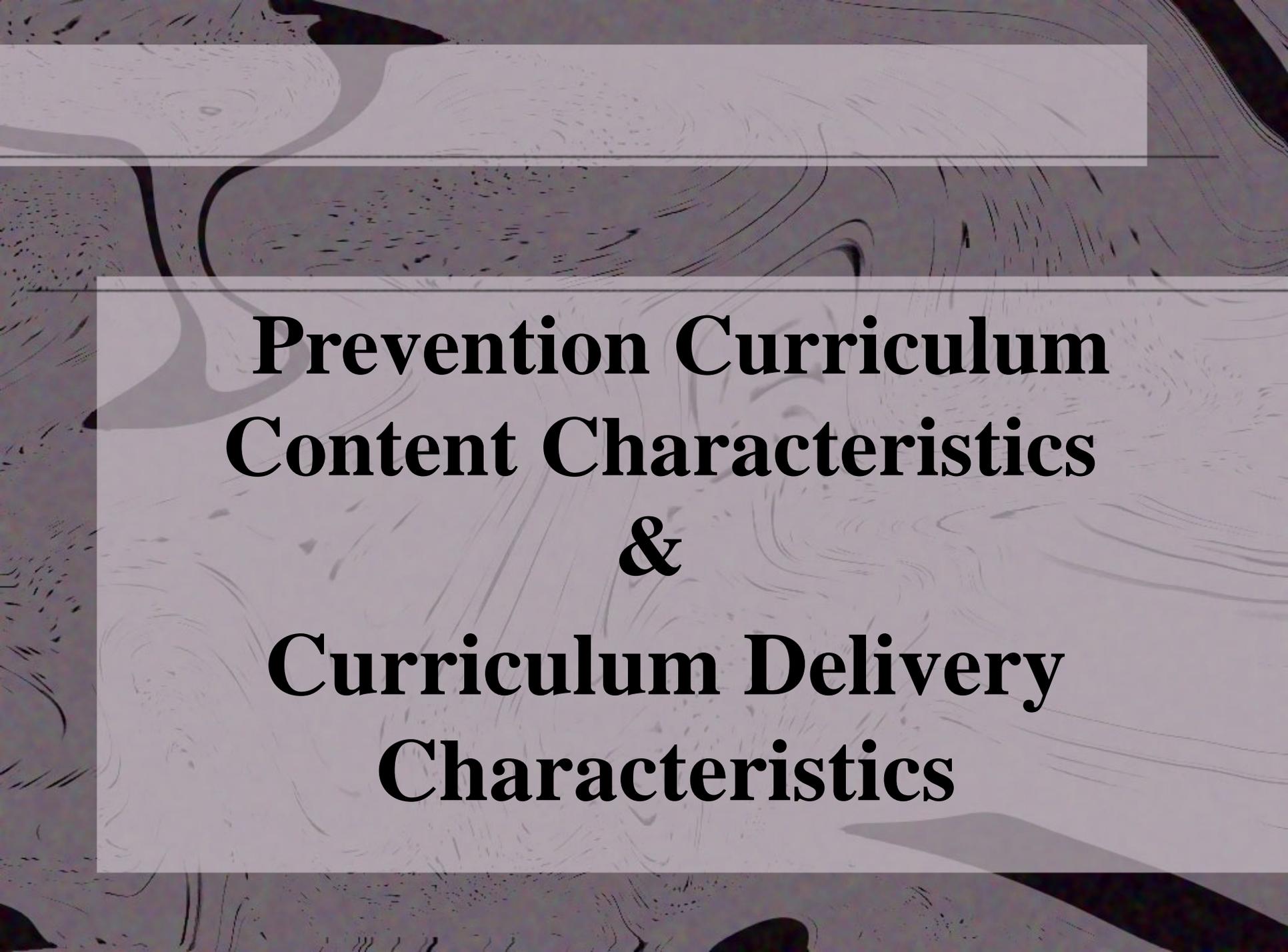
## Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)

13A.04.18.01

.01 Requirements for Comprehensive Health Education Instructional Programs for Grades K-----12.

The following comprehensive health education instructional programs shall be required in public schools for grades K-----12:

- A. Grades K-----8: Each local school system shall provide an instructional program in comprehensive health education each year for all students in grades K-----8;
- B. Grades 9-----12: Each local school system shall offer a comprehensive health education program in grades 9-----12 that shall enable students to meet graduation requirements and to select health education electives



**Prevention Curriculum  
Content Characteristics  
&  
Curriculum Delivery  
Characteristics**

# Prevention Curriculum Content Characteristics

- Accurate & up-to-date information on health promotion and risk behaviors is essential
- Normative education is essential in shaping beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors
- A strong focus on life skill development is essential
- Key concepts that cut across many health and safety issues should be emphasized

# Strong focus on life skill development

- **Critical Thinking Skills** – students make wise decisions & solve problems in social situations
- **Communication Skills** – skills needed in interpersonal relationships including assertiveness skills and refusal skills
- **Stress-Management Skills** – avoid making unhealthy choices when in stressful situations
- **Goal-setting Skills** – look ahead and think about the future when making decisions
- **Advocacy Skills** – changing environment in a positive manner

# National Health Education Standards

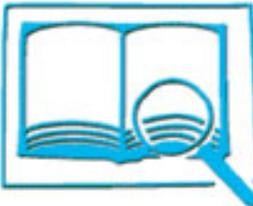


**CC**

## Core Concepts

### Health Education Standard 1

Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.

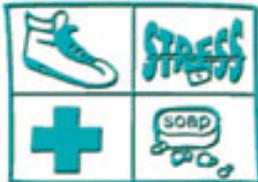


**AI**

## Accessing Information

### Health Education Standard 2

Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.



**SM**

## Self Management

### Health Education Standard 3

Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.



**INF**

## Analyzing Influences

### Health Education Standard 4

Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology and other factors on health.

# National Health Education Standards



**IC**

## **Interpersonal Communication Health Education Standard 5**

Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.



**DM**

## **Decision Making Health Education Standard 6**

Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to enhance health.



**GS**

## **Goal Setting Health Education Standard 6**

Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to enhance health.

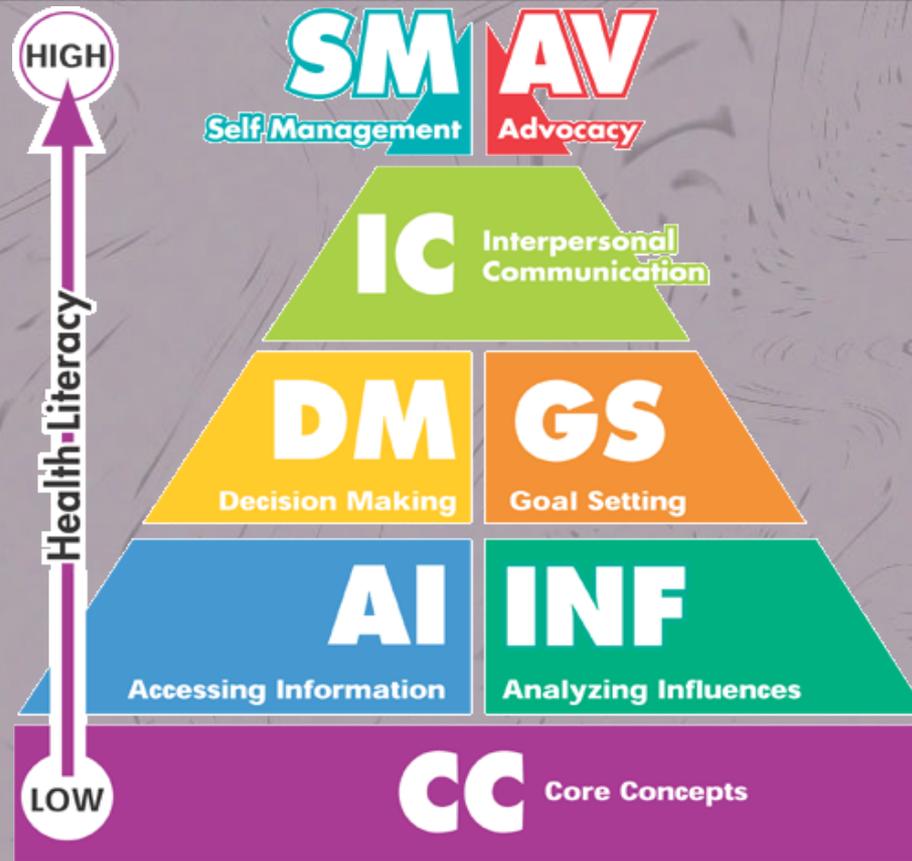


**AV**

## **Advocacy Health Education Standard 7**

Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family and community health.

# Our Mission



# Key concepts

- **Influences** - internal and external shape beliefs about healthy and risky behaviors
- **Consequences** – understanding of the physical, emotional, and social effects of engaging in risky behaviors ( +/-)
- **Safety** – skills needed to promote healthy behaviors and prevent risky behaviors
- **Responsibility** – understanding that limits need to be set in relation to behaviors

# Curriculum Delivery Characteristics

- Multiple instructional strategies are essential
- It is better to take more time to teach fewer concepts and skills
- Knowledge is the interaction between a student's prior knowledge and new information
- A sense of safety and community in the classroom is basic to student learning
- Clear and consistent messages are essential
- Involvement of parents and guardians in the instructional process is critical

# Curriculum Assessment Characteristics

- Authentic (real life situations) should be used if possible.
- A rubric or assessment components should be developed for the students.
- Proficiency standards should be adopted.

# What is a cutting edge health?

- Engagement lesson or activity.
- Essential knowledge pieces.
- Essential skills.
- How do you know you have been successful? Through a performance based assessment strategy.

# Health Literacy

**Health literacy is the capacity of an individual to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information and services and the competence to use such information and services in ways which are health-enhancing.**

**Joint Committee on Health Education Standards**

# Voluntary State Curriculum

- Weaves the skills from the National Standards into seven content standards
- Curricular framework
- Content standards: broad, measurable statements about what students should know and be able to do.
- Indicator statements: provide the next level of specificity and begin to narrow the focus for teachers
- Objectives provide teachers with very clear information about what specific learning should occur.

# Suicide Prevention

**Standard 1: Mental and Emotional Health**  
– **Students will demonstrate the ability to use mental and emotional health knowledge, skills, and strategies to enhance wellness.**

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Objectives

- a. Identify warning signs of deep depression/suicide.
- b. Formulate suicide prevention strategies.

# High School

## **Sample Objectives:**

- b. Recognize and explain warning signs of suicide.**
- d. Demonstrate ability to access information and services to help prevent suicide.**

# Lights, Camera, ACTION!

Groups will create a role play in which they demonstrate warning signs of suicide and the ACT process.

# Warning Signs - Words

- Talks, writes, or otherwise expresses a preoccupation with suicide or death in general.
- Complains of being a bad person or being "rotten inside."
- Gives verbal hints such as, "I'd be better off dead," "I won't be a problem for you much longer," "Nothing matters," "It's no use," and "I won't see you again."

# Warning Signs - Actions

- Withdraws from friends or family.
- Significantly changes eating, sleeping, or appearance habits.
- Experiences sudden drop in academic performance.
- Puts his affairs in order; for example, gives away favorite toys, cleans his room, or throws away important belongings.
- Acts in rash, hostile, or irrational ways; often expresses rage.

# Warning Signs - Feelings

- Feels overwhelmingly hopeless, guilty, or ashamed.
- Shows little interest in favorite activities or the future.
- Becomes suddenly cheerful after a period of depression (perhaps feeling that she's found a "solution" to her problems).

# ACT

- Acknowledge
  - that your friend has a problem and that the symptoms are serious.
- Care
  - let them know that you care about them and that you want to help them.
- Tell
  - a trusted adult about your concerns.

# Assessment Criteria

Answers will be scored on the following:

- How well the participants understand health concepts as they relate to suicide warning signs.
- How well the participants incorporate A.C.T. (acknowledge, care, tell) into their script.
- How well the participants use interpersonal communication to enhance health.

For questions or assistance, please contact

**Brian Griffith**

**bgriffith@msde.state.md.us**

**410-767-0327**