



**SHAKES
PEARE
FESTIVAL**

Romeo and Juliet 2023-24 Study Guide

ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival will soon share a Shakespeare & Violence Prevention project with your school. This study guide is a resource for you, whether you are an administrator, counselor, teacher, or student. Our program is most successful when participants have prepared in advance, so we encourage you to use this study guide to connect the material to your curriculum. Shakespeare offers a wonderful opportunity to explore meaningful questions, and we encourage you and your students to engage deeply with those questions.

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COLORADO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This program was developed with a standards-based focus in multiple content areas. Content areas addressed by the performances, classroom workshops, and the contents of this study guide include:

- Reading, Writing, and Communicating
- Drama and Theatre Arts
- Comprehensive Health
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Colorado Essential Skills



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ABOUT SHAKESPEARE & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival (CSF) partners with CU Boulder’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) and the Department of Theatre & Dance to create an interdisciplinary program that increases awareness of Shakespeare and violence prevention.

Our actors will visit your school to perform an abridged, three-actor version of *Romeo and Juliet* that explores the cycle of violence, using research from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. In a 45-minute performance and a 50-minute classroom workshop, we draw parallels between Shakespeare’s world and our own. We recommend the performance for grades 6-12.

Theatre is about teamwork, empathy, and change. When your students watch the play, they will observe mistreatment, cruelty, violence (including self-harm), and reconciliation. They’ll see examples of unhealthy and destructive relationships, as well as characters who become “upstanders” (people who take action to help). We hope this production opens up a dialogue about the cycle of violence and mistreatment -- and reminds us all that change is always possible.

The post-show classroom workshops, facilitated by actors from the performance, use theatre activities to increase your students’ ability to work as a team and be upstanders. We employ empathy-building and team-building activities, key elements in creating a positive school environment.

Our visit to your school aims to inspire your students with live, professional theatre, but the work does not end when our actors depart. We encourage you to continue this conversation after our visit to create positive change in your own school.

ABOUT ROMEO AND JULIET

Star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet strive for connection in a bitterly divided community. Verona’s youth are forced to bear the burden of their parents’ ancient grudge, an ultimately tragic testimony that “violent delights have violent ends.”

Why this play?

Romeo and Juliet deals with the complicated issues surrounding community violence and its impact -- as well as possibilities for prevention. The play offers many opportunities to pose important questions to students: How does violence affect young people in a community? How do we learn to cope with difficult situations? How can communication de-escalate conflict and prevent further violence? How can we build our own resilience to prevent the kind of violence we see in the play? In watching *Romeo and Juliet*, we can use empathy for the characters to examine our own choices in similar situations.

Three-Person Cast

Shakespeare’s version of this play has more than 30 characters; we combined some roles and eliminated others to focus on nine central characters played by three actors. Pay attention to how actors change character along the way.

YOUTH VIOLENCE & MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

- 5% of students in this country miss school each day because of bullying. That translates to 160,000 students missing school daily.
- 57% of the time, bullying stops in 10 seconds or less when a bystander becomes an upstander.
- 20-25% of middle school students have been bullied in the past 30 days.
- 25% of high school youth have seriously considered suicide in the past year.
- In 2019, approximately 37% of middle and high school students reported experiencing cyberbullying in their lifetime, and 30% within the last 30 days (Source: Cyberbullying Research Center)
- More info: stopbullying.gov



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Bilingual Shakespeare

This production features Spanish-speaking characters. How does this choice impact the way you hear and experience the play?

Gender and Casting

In Shakespeare's time, only men were allowed to perform publicly, so Shakespeare's plays feature a LOT of male characters. These restrictions don't make sense in today's world, so in our production, the gender of the actor may not always match the gender of the character. We hope to carve out new possibilities within these 400-year-old plays, so that the plays reflect our own time.

CONTENT WARNING

Romeo and Juliet is a play about a community troubled with violence, and the storyline involves the deaths of young people (by homicide and suicide). This content may be triggering to some members of your school community. We encourage you to have conversations with your students prior to the performance, particularly the students who may have been personally impacted by a traumatic experience. Please work with your students to make the most appropriate decisions for them regarding the in-school performance and post-show workshops.

If you are concerned about a student, please use the resources listed below:

Resources

- **Counseling team** at your school
- **Colorado Crisis Services.** Confidential and immediate support if you are in crisis or need help dealing with one, or if you are looking for additional resources. Colorado Crisis Services also answers Colorado-based calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-844-493-8255; text "TALK" to 38255; www.coloradocrisiservices.org
- **Ayuda en Español.** Lifeline ofrece 24/7, gratuito servicios en español, no es necesario hablar inglés si usted necesita ayuda. Cuando usted llama al número 1-888-628-9454, su llamada se dirige al centro de ayuda de nuestra red disponible más cercano.
- **Safe2Tell** (anonymous reporting, connects with local law enforcement and other resources): 1-877-542-7233; www.safe2tell.org
- **Cyber Bullying Research Center** (resources, research, and presentations about cyberbullying, directed by Dr. Sameer Hinduja and Dr. Justin W. Patchin): cyberbullying.org
- This study guide also includes information and handouts on Standing up to Cyberbullying (pg. 15) and Mental Health & Suicide Prevention (pg. 16-18).

PROTECTIVE FACTORS: PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND SUICIDE

- Sufficient Sleep
- Supportive relationships
- Feeling connected to peers, school, family, and community
- Involvement in prosocial activities
- Having a trusted adult
- Feeling safe at school



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How Do I Prepare?

TEACHER CHECKLIST

This might be your students' first exposure to theatre and/or Shakespeare, so we recommend establishing some norms with your students to prepare for this program:

- In theatre, actors are vulnerable onstage; they step into the shoes of another character (metaphorically) and help us see the world from another person's perspective. For actors to do their jobs, they need to know that their audience will respect their work, their bravery, and their honesty.
- We will respect the actors, we will respect one another, and we will respect ourselves. How do we cultivate a classroom of mutual respect?
- Trying new things is hard! When we work with CSF actors, we might be asked to step out of our comfort zone and participate in some activities. Let's support one another for being brave, being honest, and for trying new things.
- The Shakespeare & Violence Prevention post-performance workshops emphasize three key ideas: Teamwork, Empathy, and Change. What do these things have in common? How can we prepare ourselves to work as a team, practice empathy, and rehearse the change we'd like to see in our community?

How do I prepare my students for the play?

- Review Meet the Characters & Plot Overview (pg. 5-6) with your students.
- Use the Mini-Lesson Plan (pg. 7), Preventing Community Violence activity (pg. 8), and Things to Look For (pg. 9) to help your students think through some of the big questions presented in *Romeo and Juliet* in advance of the performance.
- Discuss appropriate theatre etiquette with your students. Our performance is frequently interactive (like Shakespeare's original performances). Students are encouraged to laugh and applaud when they enjoy the show, though we ask them not to have private conversations, use cell phones, eat during the performance, or otherwise distract the performers or their fellow students. Remind them that just as they can see and hear the actors, the actors can also see and hear the audience.

How do I prepare for post-show workshops?

- Be ready to participate and co-facilitate with our teaching artist. The more involved you are, the more your students learn!
- Talk with your class about the upcoming actor-led theatre workshop. Set expectations about trying new things and respecting one another.
- Push desks/chairs to the side of your classroom to create an open, movement-friendly space.
- At the end of the workshop, our teaching artist will step out of the room while you conduct an anonymous, 3-question poll with your students. Don't worry about preparing - they'll give you a card with the questions pre-printed.

What should I do after the visit?

- Take the 5-minute survey in your thank you email to give us feedback on the program.
- Use the Discussion Questions (pg. 10) to have a follow-up discussion with your students about the performance and the workshops.
- Look for ways to integrate the ideas and questions raised in the Shakespeare & Violence Prevention program into your lesson plans throughout the year.



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Meet the Characters

(and the actors who play them)

Two prominent families of Verona, the Montagues and the Capulets, are sworn enemies. When their feud sparks another public brawl, Verona's Prince, tired of the ongoing violence, threatens death to anyone who disturbs the peace.

THE MONTAGUES



Romeo

A poetic, smart, and imaginative teenager.



Benvolio

Romeo's cousin and friend. Peacemaker. The only teen alive at the end.



Mercutio

Romeo's best friend. Funny, inventive, hot-headed.

THE CAPULETS



Juliet

An intelligent, creative, and strong-willed teen.



Lord Capulet

Juliet's father.



Nurse

Caregiver with the Capulets; Juliet's trusted adult.



Tybalt

Juliet's cousin. Rash, angry, quick to take offense and choose violence.

THE REST OF VERONA



The Prince of Verona

A community leader trying to make peace.



Friar Laurence

Romeo's trusted adult. He thinks he knows what's best.

STAGE MANAGER / SWING



Our stage manager, Nellie, does a lot of work backstage to make sure the performance goes smoothly. She is also a "swing," or understudy, which means she has learned ALL the roles in this production so she can perform in their place if someone gets sick.



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Plot Overview

A PAIR OF STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

The lovestruck Romeo Montague is infatuated with Rosaline and crashes a Capulet party, hoping to catch a glimpse of her. Instead, he meets Juliet Capulet. The two fall in love, profess their mutual affection, and make plans to get married the next day.

Romeo's mentor, Friar Laurence, performs the wedding, hoping the marriage will resolve the feud.

A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES

Shortly after the secret marriage, Romeo runs into Juliet's hotheaded cousin Tybalt and tries to avoid a fight.

Romeo's friend Mercutio, surprised by Romeo's sudden sympathy for a Capulet, steps into the fight, and is fatally stabbed by Tybalt. Romeo kills Tybalt in revenge.

Romeo is banished by the Prince as punishment.

NEW MUTINY

Romeo and Juliet spend their first (and last) night together as a married couple before Romeo departs to live in banishment.

Juliet's parents plan her marriage to a family friend, Paris. She seeks counsel from the Friar, who gives her a drug to induce a deathlike state. This, he hopes, will buy her time to escape the arranged marriage and reunite with her husband. The Friar promises to send word to Romeo, informing him of the plan.

BURY THEIR PARENTS' STRIFE

The scheme goes awry when the Friar's message to Romeo remains undelivered. Romeo learns of Juliet's "death" and visits her tomb. Believing her truly dead, he swallows poison. Juliet awakens when her drug wears off, sees Romeo dead, and stabs herself.

The two families learn, too late, of the love between Romeo and Juliet, and they vow to bury their grievances.



SAFE2TELL provides students, parents, and community members a safe and anonymous way to report information about any issues that concern their safety or the safety of others. You can use your voice to make the life of someone else better. Sometimes if YOU don't speak up for someone, no one else will. You can make a difference. Safe2Tell will not ask for your name or contact information when you make a report.

HOW TO REPORT: (877) 542-7233 | safe2tell.org | Download the mobile app



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Mini-Lesson Plan Before the Performance

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Rationale: This mini-lesson will introduce students to the plot of the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, some key themes of this production (specifically community violence), and prepare them to take part in a Shakespeare & Violence Prevention workshop with one of CSF's actors.

Objective: Students will independently strategize ideas about addressing community violence, put themselves in the shoes of a

community leader, and participate in a class discussion about innovative violence prevention methods in their own community.

Instructions: Use this study guide to introduce the characters, plot points, and key themes and ideas of *Romeo and Juliet* to your students.

Print pg. 8 for your class.

COLORADO CURRICULUM STANDARDS

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/standards>

Reading, Writing and Communicating: Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening

- Prepared Graduates: collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully; pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others; and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective

Reading, Writing and Communicating: Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes

- Prepared Graduates: read a wide range of literary texts to build knowledge and to better understand the human experience

Drama and Theatre Arts: Standard 3: Critically Respond

- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work
- Connect artistic experiences to our world; past, present and future

Comprehensive Health: Standard 4: Prevention and Risk Management

- Prepared Graduates: apply knowledge and skills that promote healthy, violence-free relationships

ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS

SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) Core Competencies <https://casel.org>

- Self Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Relationship Skills

Colorado Essential Skills

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/essentialskills-pdf>

- Self-awareness
- Personal responsibility
- Adaptability/flexibility
- Perseverance / resilience
- Critical thinking / problem-solving
- Creativity / innovation
- Inquiry / analysis
- Informed risk taking
- Collaboration / teamwork
- Cultural awareness
- Civic engagement
- Leadership

**KINDNESS IS NEVER
A SIGN OF WEAKNESS**

NAME: _____

ACTIVITY: PREVENTING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

In the first scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, a public fight breaks out between the Montagues and the Capulets (two local feuding families). The Prince of Verona interrupts the fight, and in a public proclamation to the citizens, delivers an edict intended to prevent future violence.

Read the Prince's speech aloud, dividing the lines amongst the students.

ON YOUR OWN

1. Re-read the speech and jot down questions and thoughts about the speech on the right.

AS A CLASS

2. Analyze the speech; ask questions about the meaning of individual words and phrases and attempt to answer those questions as a class. In your own words, what is the Prince saying?

3. How would you describe the Prince's strategy to prevent violence in Verona? Why does he believe this is an effective solution?

4. In the play, the Prince's edict does not end violence in Verona; the next day, another fight breaks out in which two young people are killed (Mercutio and Tybalt); just a few days later, two more young people (Romeo and Juliet) have died by suicide. Why do you believe the violence did not end with the Prince's edict?

SMALL GROUPS

5. Discuss with your peers what other options the Prince has to prevent further violence. What would YOU do or say if you were in his position? Discuss pros and cons of various solutions and pose questions to your peers about the reasons for their responses.

6. Strategize a few ideas about how to cultivate a positive climate at your own school. What are things you, as individual students, can accomplish to create a thriving, positive environment?

AS A CLASS

7. Share your solutions with the rest of the class.

(from Folger Digital Texts)

Prince:

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbor-stained steel—
Will they not hear?—What ho! You men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins:
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your movèd prince.
Three civil brawls bred of an airy word
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave-beseeming ornaments
To wield old partisans in hands as old,
Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time all the rest depart away.
You, Capulet, shall go along with me,
And, Montague, come you this afternoon
To know our farther pleasure in this case.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

YOUR NOTES



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During the Performance: Things to Look For

- Someone confiding in another person
- A trusted adult
- Moments of miscommunication
- A situation where better coping skills could help
- Opportunities to prevent harm
- Moments of empathy
- Moments of reconciliation
- A supportive friend
- Substance abuse
- Lack of sleep
- An unhealthy home life
- A character attempting to solve a problem with violence
- A character hiding their true self to fit in
- A character being accepted and loved for their true self
- Moments of positive social connection
- Warning signs (see below)

Warning Signs

During the performance, we'll ask you to watch and listen for moments when a character is not okay, or might be on the verge of hurting themselves or others. Here are some examples of behaviors that might mean something's wrong or that something bad's about to happen.

MENTAL HEALTH

- having lost interest in things
- having low energy
- sleeping too much or too little
- spending more and more time alone
- engaging in self-harm
- having little to no interest in engaging with peers
- struggling academically or experiencing a decline in grades

SUICIDE

- talking about feeling hopeless
- having a lack of relationships and social support
- talking about wanting to die, kill oneself, or having no reason to live
- sleeping too little or too much
- seeing a local cluster of suicides
- having impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- experiencing a mental disorder (e.g., anxiety, depression, schizophrenia)

VIOLENCE

- threatening to harm another or expressing an intent to attack
- expressing intense or escalating anger
- experiencing sadness, depression, or isolation
- having an interest in weapons
- changing appearance or behavior
- attempting suicide and/or engaging in self-harm
- expressing an interest in violence
- speaking of suffering from or having suffered from aggressive bullying
- declining grades or attendance
- harassing others



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After the Performance: Discussion Questions

- What starts the violence in *Romeo and Juliet*?
- What types of mistreatment did you notice in the play?
- We never know the source of the grudge between the Capulets and the Montagues. Why do you think Shakespeare made that choice?
- What differences did you observe between the younger generation (Juliet, Romeo, Tybalt, Mercutio, Benvolio) and the older generation (Friar, Nurse, Capulet, the Prince)?
- Why do you think the Friar kept Romeo and Juliet's wedding a secret?
- What kind of behavior were the adults in the play modeling to the young people? Can you think of an example in which an adult influences a young person's behavior?
- Why do you think the Friar gave Juliet the potion?
- What were some examples of positive, supportive relationships in the play?
- What were some examples of negative, unsupportive relationships?
- How do the characters change from the beginning of the play to the end? What causes these changes?
- Read the full play, and imagine you will cut the play down to 45 minutes. Discuss what you would leave out and what you would need to keep. What do you see as the heart of the play?
- What is empathy? Why is it important? How might empathy have changed the outcomes in the play?
- Actors use teamwork to trust one another when they are onstage. How is teamwork useful in school?
- How could you apply what you've learned here in your school? How could you apply this outside of school? If you saw someone struggling, how could you safely take action?

Cyberbullying

(from the Cyberbullying Research Center)

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

Persistent – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for children experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.

Permanent – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.

Hard to Notice – Because teachers and parents may not overhear or see cyberbullying taking place, it is harder to recognize.

Colorado Shakespeare Festival Education Programs

coloradoshakes.org/education
csfedout@colorado.edu
(303) 735-1181

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence

colorado.edu/cspv
(303) 492-1032



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Standing up to Cyberbullying

Top Ten Tips for Teens

Sameer Hinduja, Ph.D. and Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D.

Don't be a bystander -- stand up to cyberbullying when you see it. Take action to stop something that you know is wrong. These **Top Ten Tips** will give you specific ideas of what **you can do** when you witness cyberbullying.

- 1. REPORT TO SCHOOL.** If the person being cyberbullied is someone from your school, report it to your school. Many have anonymous reporting systems to allow you to let them know what you are seeing without disclosing your identity.
- 2. COLLECT EVIDENCE.** Take a screenshot, save the image or message, or screen-record what you see. It will be easier for an adult to help if they can see -- and have proof of -- exactly what was being said.
- 3. REPORT TO SITE / APP / GAME.** All reputable online environments prohibit cyberbullying and provide easy tools to report violations. Don't hesitate to report; those sites/apps will protect your identity and not "out" you.
- 4. TALK TO A TRUSTED ADULT.** Develop relationships with adults you can trust and count on to help when you (or a friend) experience something negative online. This could be a parent, teacher, counselor, coach, or family friend.
- 5. DEMONSTRATE CARE.** Show the person being cyberbullied that they are not alone. Send them an encouraging text or snap. Take them aside at school and let them know that you have their back.
- 6. WORK TOGETHER.** Gather your other friends and organize a full-court press of positivity. Post kind comments on their wall or under a photo they've posted. Encourage others to help report the harm. There is strength in numbers.
- 7. TELL THEM TO STOP.** If you know the person who is doing the cyberbullying, tell them to knock it off. Explain that it's not cool to be a jerk to others. But say something -- if you remain silent, you are basically telling them that it is ok to do it.
- 8. DON'T ENCOURAGE IT.** If you see cyberbullying happening, don't support it in any way. Don't forward it, don't add emojis in the comments, don't gossip about it with your friends, and don't stand on the sidelines.
- 9. STAY SAFE.** Don't put yourself in harm's way. When your emotions are running high, resist posting something that may escalate the situation. Don't hang out online where most people are cruel. Never physically threaten others.
- 10. DON'T GIVE UP.** Think creatively about what can be done to stop cyberbullying. Brainstorm with others and use everyone's talents to do something epic!

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention: How to Talk to Children and Youth

Office of Suicide Prevention, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment

A suicide death is a traumatic and difficult loss, and the impact of suicide can leave grieving individuals and communities with questions. One of the first questions people often ask is: Why? Why did this person die by suicide?

Suicide is always a complex issue: There is never just one reason why someone will attempt or die by suicide. Learning about a young person's death by suicide often evokes complicated feelings and raises an additional question: How should we talk with children and youth about mental health and suicide prevention?

It is important that adults establish open communication with children and youth to ask about their emotions, their worries, and what gives them hope. Being able to talk about complex and challenging emotions is a way to build and strengthen resilience, coping skills, and connections to caring, trusted adults. Although it can be scary, normalizing these conversations and being empathetic listeners can be the most important first step we can take in preventing suicides among children and youth and in supporting good mental health.

KEY TERMS

Child: those younger than age 12

Youth: those between ages 13 and 18

Young adults: those between 19 and 24

Young people: all of the above

Understanding youth stressors

As parents, caregivers, and trusted adults, we can support youth and children with the stressors they face on a daily basis, and that, in rare circumstances, may contribute to suicidal behaviors and attempts. For a young person, factors that could contribute to a suicidal crisis might include a combination of the following:

- stress.
- feeling socially isolated.
- lack of sleep or irregular sleeping patterns.
- exposure to bullying.
- mental health conditions.
- adverse childhood experiences and traumatic experiences.
- discrimination about one's identity (gender identity and/or sexual orientation).
- periods of transition.
- economic stressors.

How to listen and offer support

In order to have open conversations around mental health with young people, it is important to show that we are listening: Ask questions that show we care, validate emotions, help build problem-solving skills (which is different from solving their problems for them), and make space and time for ongoing conversations.



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During these conversations, ask open-ended questions about mental health and listen closely and openly to the responses. Possible questions can be:

- Do you ever get sad or lonely? What do you do to feel better?
- Do you ever feel stressed? What do you do to feel less stressed out?
- Do you or your friends ever talk about hurting yourselves or wanting to die?

Sleep is an often overlooked stressor, and lack of sleep or irregular sleeping patterns can be a risk factor for suicide. Ample sleep can protect young people from many negative health consequences. Adults can support a young person's mental health by creating and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. It is recommended that children between the ages of 7 and 12 get 10-11 hours of sleep each night. Adults can help support a healthy sleeping environment by limiting access to social media at night, or by establishing routines that help ensure that a child or youth is getting the appropriate amount of sleep. Getting enough sleep is important for the mental well-being of people of any age!

Knowing the warning signs and life-saving resources

Although suicide attempts and suicide deaths among youth and children are rare, even one death by suicide is too many. In order to prevent children and youth suicide attempts and deaths, it is important to be aware of the following potential warning signs that can indicate that the young person is severely depressed or having thoughts of suicide:

- Expressing unbearable emotional pain, feeling trapped, or hopelessness.
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Talking or posting on social media about suicide or wanting to die.
- Suddenly becoming calm or cheerful after a long period of depression.
- Looking for a way to kill themselves.
- Telling people "good-bye."
- Saying they wish they could fall asleep and never wake up, or that everyone would be better off without them.
- Change in sleeping patterns (including sleeping too much or too little).

If you are concerned about possible suicide risk for anyone, including a young person, please ask that person if they are thinking of hurting themselves or are having thoughts of suicide. Research clearly shows that talking or asking about suicide will not put the idea of suicide in their head. It shows that you are concerned about them and willing to help. Direct questions like, "Are you having thoughts of suicide?" or "Are you thinking of killing yourself?" are straightforward and ask for a clear yes/no answer.

If someone responds "yes," it is important to listen to their emotions and for information about a possible plan, including if the individual has identified how, where, and when they may attempt suicide. When an individual has specific plans regarding suicide, this can indicate a higher risk. No matter the level of specificity, it is important to connect an individual who is considering suicide with a mental health provider or mental health resources as soon as possible.



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If you are concerned that a loved one is struggling with a mental health crisis, is having thoughts of suicide, or if you just have a gut feeling that something is off, please call Colorado Crisis Services, available 24/7/365 at 1-844-493-8255. A trained crisis counselor will answer your call and help you navigate your situation.

Safer Environments Reduce Suicide Risk

When we consider how to reduce suicide risk, especially when someone is in a mental health crisis, a crucial first step is to reduce access to lethal means. Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis, and ensuring that an environment is as safe as possible is essential in preventing potential suicide deaths.

Suicide attempts by firearms are particularly lethal. The majority of firearms used in youth suicides belong to a parent. Securing firearms or temporarily storing them away from the home greatly reduces the risk of a child or youth dying by suicide using a firearm. Safely and securely storing medications and substances also reduces risk. It is also important to continue to be aware of the individual and their environment. If an individual has shared that they are thinking about suicide, learning more about this despair and if they have a plan can also provide important information on how to keep an environment as safe as possible for that individual and everyone else.

In It Together

The best suicide prevention is comprehensive and collaborative. The more that people, organizations, and communities work together to support positive mental health, coping skills, resiliency, and openness around discussing suicide and mental health, the better the result for everyone, including young people. Talking about suicide with those we care about can feel scary, but there are resources in Colorado to help support you, your family, and your community.

Helpful Resources:

Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention: www.coosp.org

**Colorado Crisis Services: 1-844-493-8255, www.coloradocrisisservices.org.
Text TALK to 38255.**

The Trevor Project: www.thetrevorproject.org (for LGBTQ+ youth)

Colorado School Safety Resource Center: www.colorado.gov/cssrc

The Second Wind Fund: www.thesecondwindfund.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Colorado: www.namicolorado.org

The Suicide Prevention Coalition of Colorado: www.suicidepreventioncolorado.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention-CO Chapter: www.afsp.org/chapter/afsp-colorado

Mental Health Colorado: www.mentalhealthcolorado.org

The Colorado Behavioral Healthcare Council: www.cbhc.org

Youth Mental Health First Aid: www.MHFACO.org

For more information, please contact:

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**SHAKES
PEARE
FESTIVAL**

Tips from CSPV

HOW TO BE AN UPSTANDER

- Refuse to join in if someone tries to get you to taunt and torment another person.
- Get a teacher, parent, or other responsible adult to come help. This isn't snitching. You are saying that you don't think bullying is acceptable and don't want anyone to get hurt.
- Try to get the person being bullied to tell a trusted adult. Offer to go with them.
- Tell a trusted adult yourself if the person being bullied is unwilling to report it. Do not let the person behaving as a bully know so that they do not become aggressive toward you.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

One of the most important components of a safe school is a climate where youth feel secure and supported in their learning environment. As part of the Safe Communities Safe Schools (SCSS) project, the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence offers school climate surveys, at a low cost, with options for students, staff, and parents. For more information about our surveys or to administer any of the SCSS Surveys at your school, please contact us via email at cspv@colorado.edu or by phone at 303-492-1032.

<https://cspv.colorado.edu/what-we-do/surveys/>

Program Sponsors

"I can no other answer make but thanks, and thanks, and ever thanks."

-Twelfth Night

The Colorado Shakespeare Festival is deeply grateful for the support of these generous sponsors, who make the Shakespeare & Violence Prevention program possible.



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We honor and acknowledge that the Colorado Shakespeare Festival resides on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations. We recognize the sophisticated and intricate knowledge systems Indigenous people have developed in relationship to their lands and respect the many diverse Indigenous peoples still connected to this land. You can learn more about the original inhabitants where you live by searching your (or your school's) address at native-land.ca