



## TAG in Action: Sources of Strength

As part of its national call to action, **Adolescent Health, Think, Act, Grow<sup>SM</sup> (TAG)**, the Office of Adolescent Health, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service has identified a number of successful strategies for improving adolescent health throughout the country.



### The Goal

Sources of Strength is a universal, peer-leadership approach to preventing youth suicide, bullying, violence and substance abuse. The program trains peer leaders to use positive social norming methods to create healthy climate and cultural change.

### The Game Plan

Sources of Strength empowers both peer leaders and caring adults to impact their world through the power of connection, hope, help and strength. The program begins with an extensive training for adult advisors who will help coordinate the program and support the peer leader team. The adult advisors are trained on starting-up and implementing the program, and most importantly, on how to truly partner with youth throughout implementation. The peer leaders are then trained along side their adult advisors. Using games and fun activities, the youth learn to tell their own story of strength and overcoming adversity and to identify adults whom they trust. They talk about how seeking help from adults is a sign of bravery and courage, not weakness.

As part of the training and ongoing support, the peer leaders and their adult advisors are given tools to create similar opportunities for all youth in their school or community to develop their own positive narrative and build stronger connections with adults. Sources of Strength provides suggestions, materials and templates, such as sample [campaigns](#). However they encourage peer leaders and adult advisors to adapt the program to fit their school or community culture and to create strategies that are contextual and localized. The program is currently in over 300 locations, including middle schools, high schools, universities, tribal communities and juvenile justice centers.

### The Winning Plays

Sources of Strength national trainer, Daniel Adams, attributes the program's success to "our radically positive, strengths-based approach." The five-hour peer leader training focuses less on the negative outcomes and warnings signs of suicide and more on resiliency, recovery, and strengths that help youth and young adults overcome difficulties. Peer leaders spend time telling their own positive self-narratives and practicing actual help-seeking pathways with caring adults in their life. Also critical to their success is an ongoing commitment to program evaluation. Over the past decade Sources of Strength has been rigorously evaluated, and among other designations, in 2011 was listed on [SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices \(NREPP\)](#).

### Learn More

Sources of Strength  
<https://sourcesofstrength.org/>

