

# CHALLENGE your inner critic

Many times, your emotions follow your thoughts. What you say to yourself (“I look terrible.” “I’ll never get into a good college.”) can make you feel sad. Lots of people have found that changing that inner voice can make a big difference in how they feel.

**You say:**  
I’ll never do well on this test. I always do poorly on exams.

**Try:**  
I can do well on this test. I’m well prepared, and I can review the material before the test.

**You say:**  
I’m so embarrassed by what I did. No one will ever forget, and I’ll be a fool forever.

**Try:**  
People are usually so concerned with what they are doing themselves, they won’t focus on what I did. People will forget.

**You say:**  
Of course this happens to me. Everything bad happens to me.

**Try:**  
Everyone experiences setbacks, and this is just one thing I have to get through. I’ll feel stronger when I’m through it!

**Dear SOS:** My girlfriend cuts herself when she feels stressed. She says I don’t need to worry about it, but I am. What should I do?

-Sam

**Dear SOS:** I know someone who has been harming himself for a while. Is it possible for him to recover?

- Hannah

**Dear Sam:** What your girlfriend is doing is called **self-injury**, and some teens do it to deal with painful emotions such as anxiety, anger, sadness, or shame. Self-injury is not usually a suicide attempt. However, it is important that you take this issue seriously. If you are concerned, you need to ACT. You’ve already *Acknowledged* that self-injury is something serious. Be sure to let your girlfriend know how much you *Care* about her and then encourage her to *Tell* a trusted adult. If you can’t convince her to talk to an adult, you may need to tell someone for her. This can be very hard but it is necessary for her to get the help she needs.

**Dear Hannah:** **Absolutely!** Most people overcome self-injury through counseling or other treatment. Developing ways to calm yourself when stressed is also important: talking with a trusted adult, exercising, listening to calming music, or creating art work are all examples.

**IF YOU OR A FRIEND IS SELF-INJURING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK HELP RIGHT AWAY. REMEMBER: ACT!**



**HELPFUL WEBSITES:**

- [Kidshealth.org/teen](http://Kidshealth.org/teen)
- [Thecoolspot.gov](http://Thecoolspot.gov)
- [Toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov](http://Toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov)
- [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)



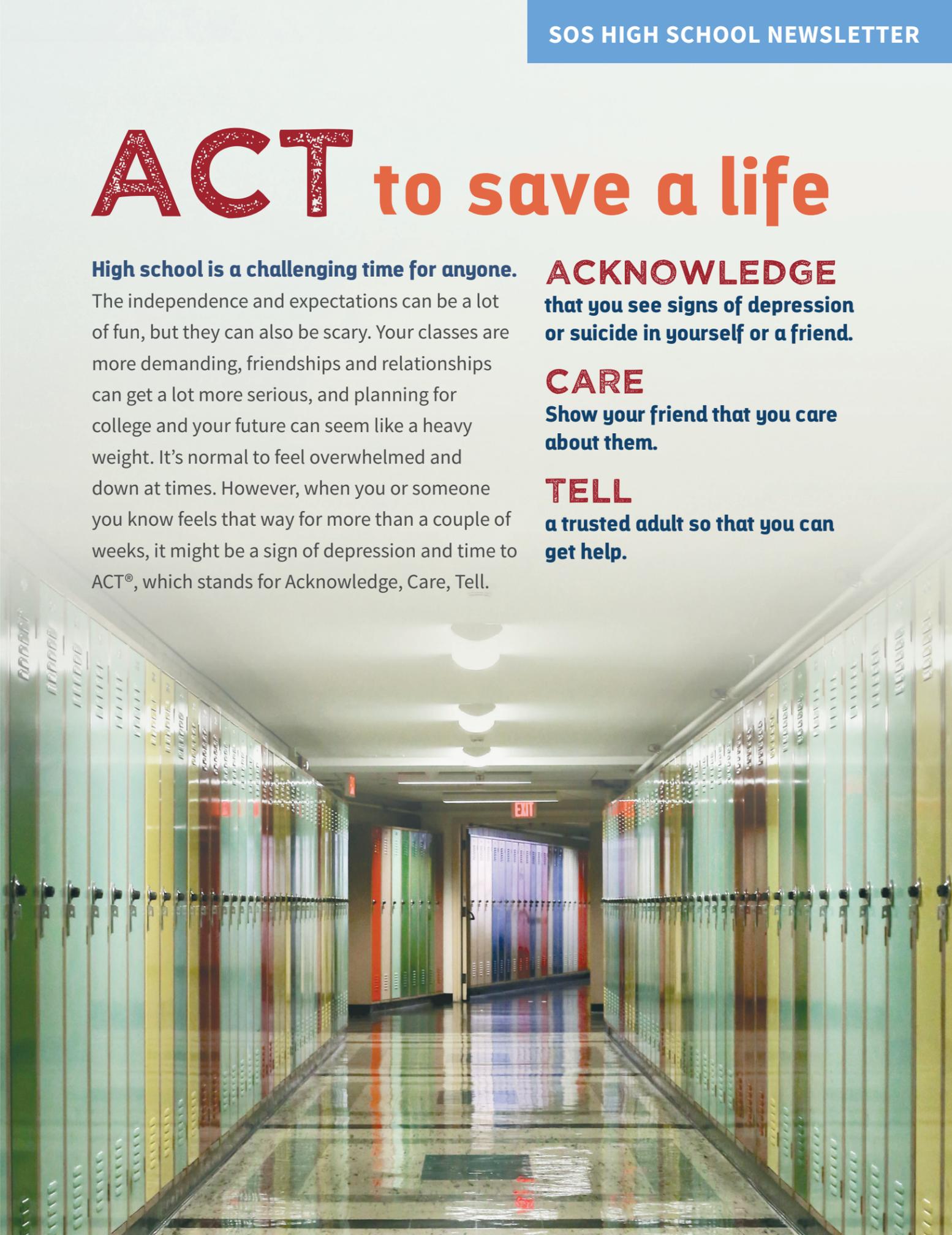
# ACT to save a life

**High school is a challenging time for anyone.** The independence and expectations can be a lot of fun, but they can also be scary. Your classes are more demanding, friendships and relationships can get a lot more serious, and planning for college and your future can seem like a heavy weight. It’s normal to feel overwhelmed and down at times. However, when you or someone you know feels that way for more than a couple of weeks, it might be a sign of depression and time to ACT®, which stands for Acknowledge, Care, Tell.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that you see signs of depression or suicide in yourself or a friend.

**CARE** Show your friend that you care about them.

**TELL** a trusted adult so that you can get help.



# Is it a bad day something more?

**IT'S EASY TO HAVE A LOUSY DAY OR WEEK WHEN YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL.** You could be fighting with friends. You may not make the team or the school play, and you feel awful. What happens when feeling down about something turns into feeling hopeless or sad for a long time? It could be depression, but it can be hard for people to know the difference.

## WHAT DEPRESSION IS:

- ➔ **Long-lasting.** Feeling a strong mood that involves sadness, discouragement, despair, or hopelessness that lasts for weeks or longer.
- ➔ **Having difficulty concentrating.** It can be difficult to focus on school work or other things when someone is depressed.
- ➔ **Negative thinking.** A person who is depressed may see everything as bad, and not likely to get better.
- ➔ **Low energy.** Sometimes, people with depression do not have much energy to get up and do what they used to enjoy.
- ➔ **Easily irritated.** Depression doesn't always look like sadness. Sometimes it can show up as a lasting mood of feeling irritable, easily annoyed, or angry.

More information: [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/mental\\_health/depression.html#](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/mental_health/depression.html#)



Anyone who wants to talk can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** or text "Hello" to **741741**

## "MY FRIEND JUST POSTED SOMETHING & NOW I'M WORRIED"

People often communicate their happiest—and saddest—feelings online. We often wonder what to do if a friend's post concerns us, and how to know if we should take some action. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline suggests that the following types of posts are warning signs:

- Writing about wanting to die or to kill oneself.
- Writing about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live.
- Writing about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Writing about being a burden to others.
- Writing about seeking revenge.

More information: [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/online.aspx](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/gethelp/online.aspx)

Most of the commonly used social media sites have safety procedures that you can find online at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's website. Whether you encounter a warning sign in person or online, you can **ACT** to help a friend in need.

## ALCOHOL MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH

Drinking alcohol is safer than doing other drugs.

FACT

Drinking too much alcohol can lead to alcohol poisoning and death. It can also cause many other physical problems and even contribute to cancer later in life.

MYTH

Drinking is a good way to loosen up at parties.

FACT

Alcohol makes you lose your judgment and say and do things you would not otherwise do, such as get in fights or ride with someone who has been drinking.

MYTH

I see adults drink, so kids should have no trouble with it.

FACT

Teenagers' brains are still developing, so drinking as a teen can cause learning problems or lead to a higher risk of alcoholism in adulthood.

MYTH

Everybody in high school drinks. I'd be weird if I didn't.

FACT

Most young people do not drink alcohol. Studies show that about 70% of people between the ages of 12 and 20 had not had any alcohol in the past month.

More information: [www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/media/pdf/mythsfactsbrochure\\_508compliant.pdf](http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/media/pdf/mythsfactsbrochure_508compliant.pdf)

## NEED TO TALK?

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. In addition to listening, they have access to local resources. Get support for yourself or someone you care about.

 **CALL 1-800-273-TALK (8255) to save a life**

## STRUGGLING with your SEXUALITY OR GENDER?



There is someone available NOW who can talk to you! Contact the Trevor Project's free hotline at **866-488-7386**.

This is a free, confidential phone service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth. You can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit their website at [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org).