

ST. MARY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT "RU OK?" CAMPAIGN FOCUS GROUPS

REPORT DATE: JUNE 17, 2021



METHODOLOGY

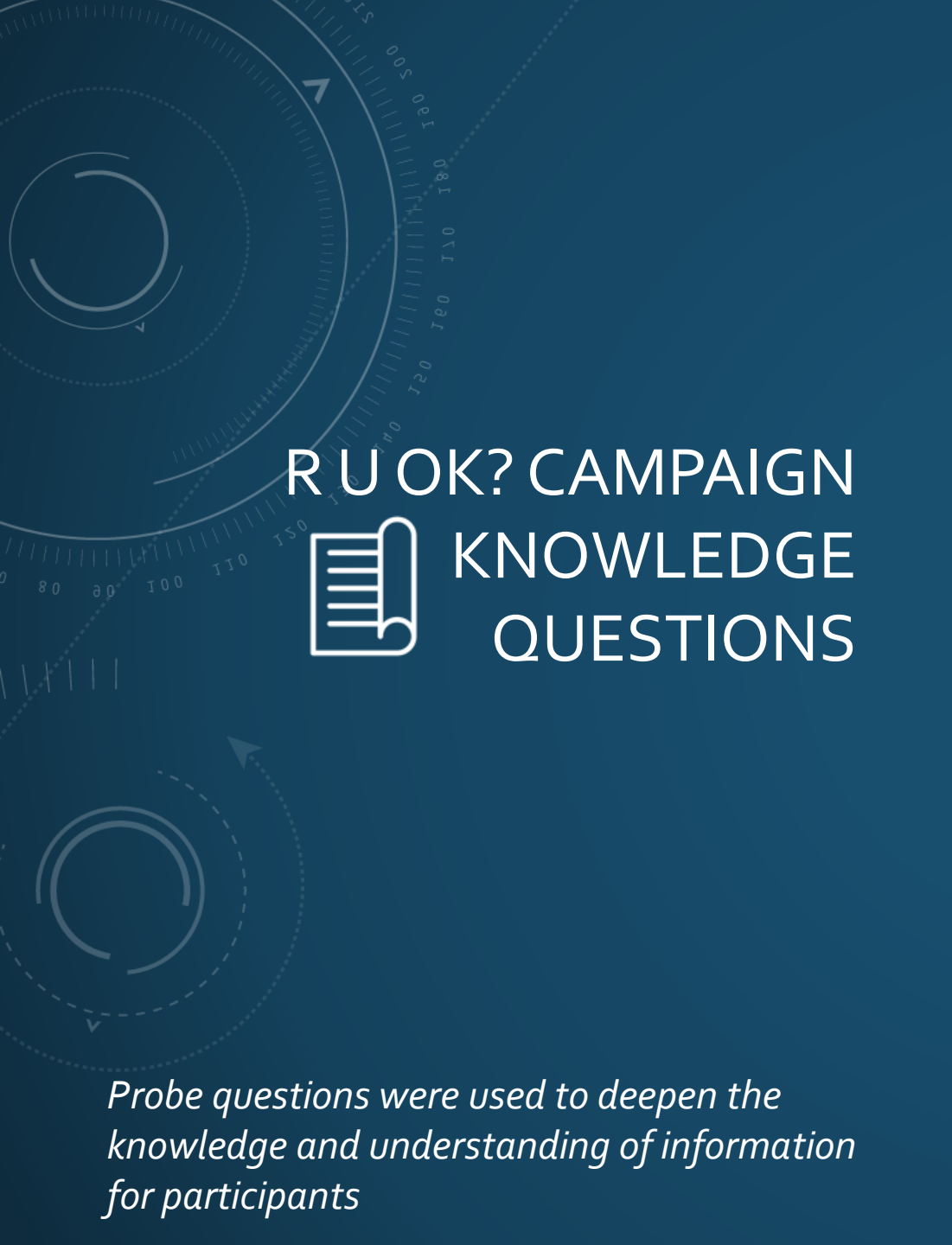
- St. Mary County Health Department hosted four focus groups to test the resonance of the R U OK social marketing campaign that aims to prevent suicide by empowering and encouraging community members to have regular, meaningful conversations with those around them by asking, 'Are you OK?'
- Two groups were held on May 7th at 6 pm and 7:30 pm
Two groups were held on May 25th at 6 pm and 8:30 pm
- The focus groups were segmented as follows:
 - St. Mary County, high school students



DEMOGRAPHICS

8 Participants Total in 4 groups

- 6 Females
- 2 Males
- 5 White
- 3 African-American

The graphic features a dark blue background with white text and icons. On the left, there are faint, stylized circular patterns resembling a clock face or a data visualization. The text 'R U OK? CAMPAIGN' is at the top, followed by a white icon of a document with a checklist, and then 'KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS' in a larger font.

R U OK? CAMPAIGN KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONS

- How can you tell if someone you know is in crisis?
- What types of media platforms do you, your friends and your classmates use? Examples include tv, radio such as Spotify and Pandora, and social media such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. In other words, how do you learn or receive information?
 - Have you heard of the R U OK? media campaign? If so, how would you describe it?
- How would you describe the purpose of the R U OK? campaign? OR What message do you think these ads are providing? OR What is the main idea that you are taking away from the ad?
- What do you like about the R U OK? campaign? What, if anything, works well in trying to get the message out to students?
 - What is most influential about the campaign?
- What do you dislike about the R U OK? campaign? What, if anything, is not working well in getting the message out to students?
 - Is there anything hard to believe or not credible in the campaign?
- What do you think, if anything, can be improved about the R U OK? campaign? In other words, if you could develop the campaign, what would you do differently?

Probe questions were used to deepen the knowledge and understanding of information for participants



R U OK? CAMPAIGN KEY FINDINGS

Participants' Responses

TikTok and Snapchat are the top social media platforms reported by students

Current thoughts on how to tell if someone is in crisis:

- A change in behavior is a clue
- A change in eating habits
- Facial Expression
- Trying to stay away from people
- Not up to doing anything
- Through social media by posting their own stories when they are in a bad mood
- Acting differently than normal (visually, verbally, emotionally)
- Some students would tell/ inform that they are in trouble

Best ways to reach out to someone in crisis

- Asking parents for advice on how to reach out to someone in crisis
- Reach out to an expert such as a grieving or depression counselor
- Reach out to people in crisis and say, "I'm always here if you need to talk" and comfort them
- I would avoid crossing the comfort zone of someone
- Take time to think and tackle how to speak with them without making them scared

How do students prefer to get the information about awareness campaigns such as R U OK? campaign

- All participants prefer to receive info as a form of ads on social media platforms such as TikTok and Snapchat
- Social media ads such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are good for parents



R U OK? CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY




RU ok?

Worried about your child's mental health?

Click for resources to help teens cope with stress and anxiety.



ST. MARY'S COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Funded by SAMHSA and MDH



RU ok?

It's OK to feel upset. There's a lot going on.

Click for resources on coping with stress.



ST. MARY'S COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Funded by SAMHSA and MDH

RU ok?

be the one to ask

reach out to someone who may be struggling...



RU ok?

be the one to ask

RU ok? encourages everyone to reach out to their friends who may be struggling.


SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR:

- They don't feel like hanging out as much
- They are so anxious they can't relax
- They've gotten negative about life
- They talk about feeling hopeless
- They are harming themselves

DON'T WAIT, GET HELP NOW.

IN AN EMERGENCY
If you or your friend need urgent help, call 911. Stay with your friend until help arrives. Remember to keep yourself safe. If you feel threatened or your friend has a weapon, keep a safe distance.

IN A CRISIS
Text HOME to the crisis textline 741741.



ST. MARY'S COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Funded by SAMHSA and MDH



RU OK? CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY

(CONTINUED)



**RU
ok?**

be the one to ask

RU ok? encourages students to reach out to other students who may be struggling.

- SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR:**
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REACH OUT TO A SCHOOL COUNSELOR

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IN A CRISIS

Text HOME to the crisis textline 741741



**RU
ok?**

be the one to ask

**EMERGENCY:
CALL 911**

**SUICIDE LIFELINE:
1-800-273-TALK**

**24 HOUR REFERRALS:
CALL 211 OR
VISIT 211.ORG**



Funded by SAMHSA and MDH

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**RU
ok?**

**DON'T
MASK
YOUR
FEELINGS.**

Click for mental health and crisis resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.



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**RU
ok?**



DON'T MASK YOUR FEELINGS. WWW.SMCHD.ORG

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RU OK? CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY (CONTINUED)



be the one to ask

Signs and Symptoms of Someone in Crisis

The behaviors listed below may be signs that someone is thinking about suicide.

- Talking about wanting to die or wanting to kill themselves
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or having no reason to live
- Making a plan or looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online, stockpiling pills, or buying a gun
- Talking about great guilt or shame
- Talking about feeling trapped or feeling that there are no solutions
- Feeling unbearable pain (emotional pain or physical pain)
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Using alcohol or drugs more often
- Acting anxious or agitated
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Changing eating and/or sleeping habits
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Taking great risks that could lead to death, such as driving extremely fast
- Talking or thinking about death often
- Displaying extreme mood swings, suddenly changing from very sad to very calm or happy
- Giving away important possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Putting affairs in order, making a will

If these warning signs apply to you or someone you know, get help as soon as possible, particularly if the behavior is new or has increased recently.

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

1. **Ask: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"** It's not an easy question but studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.
2. **Keep them safe:** Reducing a suicidal person's access to highly lethal items or places is an important part of suicide prevention. While this is not always easy, asking if the at-risk person has a plan and removing or disabling the lethal means can make a difference.
3. **Be there:** Listen carefully and learn what the individual is thinking and feeling. Findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may in fact reduce rather than increase suicidal thoughts.
4. **Help them connect:** Save the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's number in your phone so it's there when you need it: **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**. You can also help make a connection with a trusted individual like a family member, friend, spiritual advisor, or mental health professional.
5. **Stay Connected:** Staying in touch after a crisis or after being discharged from care can make a difference. Studies have shown the number of suicide deaths goes down when someone follows up with the at-risk person.

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

In an emergency, call **911**

In a crisis, text **HOME** to the crisis textline **741741**

24 hour service for referrals to community health care providers and resources, call **211** or visit **211.org**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

P.O. Box 316
21580 Peabody Street
Leonsardtown, MD 20650
Tel: 301-475-4200
www.amchd.org



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be the one to ask



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ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Funded by BHA and SAMHSA

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**CRISIS: TEXT
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741741**

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RU OK? CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY

(CONTINUED)




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**ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Funded by BHA and SAMHSA

Worried about your child's mental health?

SMCHD.ORG/RUOK



**ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**



Funded by MDH and SAMHSA



CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY

Pros

- Looks familiar, and I saw this ad at my school (Nurse room)
- Great mix of ads showing different perspectives
- Expresses people's emotions
- I like the ad that says, "Be the one that asks". The message here is direct and clear
- I like the ads with the phone numbers that people can text if they are in crisis and need help or someone to chat with
- The ads are helpful to address the suicide problems in our community because at schools, they don't teach us how to overcome real-life problems such as suicide or depression
- The message is short and easy to understand
- I like the ad with the woman in the uniform. Even though she is powerful, she might be struggling in real life
- I like the business card ad. Students could grab it and keep it in their wallets
- The ad makes people more comfortable to reach out to people who are struggling

CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY

Cons

- I don't go to school since COVID-19, and all my classes are online. I haven't seen the ads on social media or online before
- The message of the campaign in the ads is not clear to describe that someone is in crisis
- Not sure if the message targets me
- Never seen the ad on social media before
- Use happy colors (Dark blue color is sometimes sad)
- Long sentences in some ads are hard to follow or read
- Ads look very old. They sound like ads in the early 2000s
- Very old branding
- It is not clear what type of crisis people are having in each ad
- I don't bother reading pamphlets
- Font is very formal for students

CAMPAIGN ADS SUMMARY

Recommendations:

- The ads is only located at the nurse rooms and should be posted everywhere at school to be noticed by students
- A school bathroom is a good location to post the ad. Students will notice and read them
- Would be nice if the teachers* can promote the message of "R U OK?" in the classroom and provide students with a website link to visit
- I think we should add a question in the ad and ask people if they have any of these signs
- It is better to show multiple ads together in the same location
- I don't know if students would be interested in grabbing cards/ flyers on suicide
- Make a presentation for students to discuss the suicide topic at school. Encourage students to participate by announcing that they could win a prize if they participated
- Make the ad more curious e.g., Little John is sad, let's see what's going on
- Make a message/ad that says, we helped Sally, we helped Kathy and we can help you too if you are in crisis
- Increase the font size in the ads

* Many students recommended to involve teachers to be part of the campaign and promote the R U OK? message

Majority of the students didn't recommend using magnets or pamphlets for the media campaign