

## Professor Madelyn Gould



Madelyn Gould, Ph.D., M.P.H., is a Professor in Psychiatry and Epidemiology at Columbia University; a Research Scientist at the New York State Psychiatric Institute; and Deputy Director of Research Training Program in Child Psychiatry, Columbia University/New York State Psychiatric Institute.

Dr. Gould's longstanding research interests include the epidemiology of youth suicide, and the evaluation of youth suicide prevention interventions. Dr. Gould has received numerous U.S. federally funded grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIMH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for studies examining risk factors for teenage suicide; cluster suicides; the impact of the media on suicide; the effect of a peer's suicide on fellow students; suicide crisis intervention programs in schools; the effect of youth suicide screening programs, and the utility of telephone crisis services.

Her participation in state and U.S. national government commissions includes the 1978 President's Commission on Mental Health and the Secretary of Health and Human Services' Task Force on Youth Suicide in 1989. In addition, she authored the chapter on youth suicide prevention for the Surgeon General's 1999 National Suicide Prevention Strategy, and served as a leadership consultant for the Surgeon General's Leadership Working Group for the National Suicide Prevention Strategy. She has also contributed to the CDC's community response plan for suicide clusters (1988) and recommendations to optimize media reporting of suicide (1994), and has been a member of national and international workgroups updating these recommendations.

The recipient of the Shneidman Award for Research from the American Association of Suicidology (AAS) in 1991, the New York State Office of Mental Health Research (NYSOMH) Award in 2002, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Research Award in 2006, Dr. Gould has a strong commitment to applying her research to program and policy development.

### **ABSTRACT:** School-based Suicide Prevention Strategies: What is the Evidence?

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Several school-based suicide prevention strategies have undergone evaluation, demonstrating effects on factors related to teen suicide. Types of school-based suicide prevention strategies to be covered by this presentation are screening for at-risk youth, adult gatekeeper and peer leadership training, skills training, and comprehensive or "whole school" programmes. Although none of these programmes can be said conclusively to reduce rates of youth suicide, beneficial effects of several programmes have been demonstrated to date. School-based screening programmes have been shown successfully to identify at-risk youth and to link them to mental health services. One gatekeeper training programme has been shown to improve adult and youth knowledge and attitudes about suicide; another has demonstrated success in linking gatekeeper-identified youth with mental health treatment; and a peer gatekeeper

training programme with a screening component has been shown to reduce self-reported youth suicide attempts. Three skills training programmes have produced decreases in suicidal ideation. An ecological peer leadership intervention has demonstrated improvements in youth attitudes toward help-seeking. Finally, two comprehensive school programmes have been associated with declines in youth suicide rates, although it is not known whether this decline is a programme effect. Each of these types of youth suicide prevention programmes merits continued attention and evaluation. A continuing challenge is to adapt these programmes to different cultures, particularly in developing countries in Asia, Africa and South America, where suicide prevention remains inchoate.