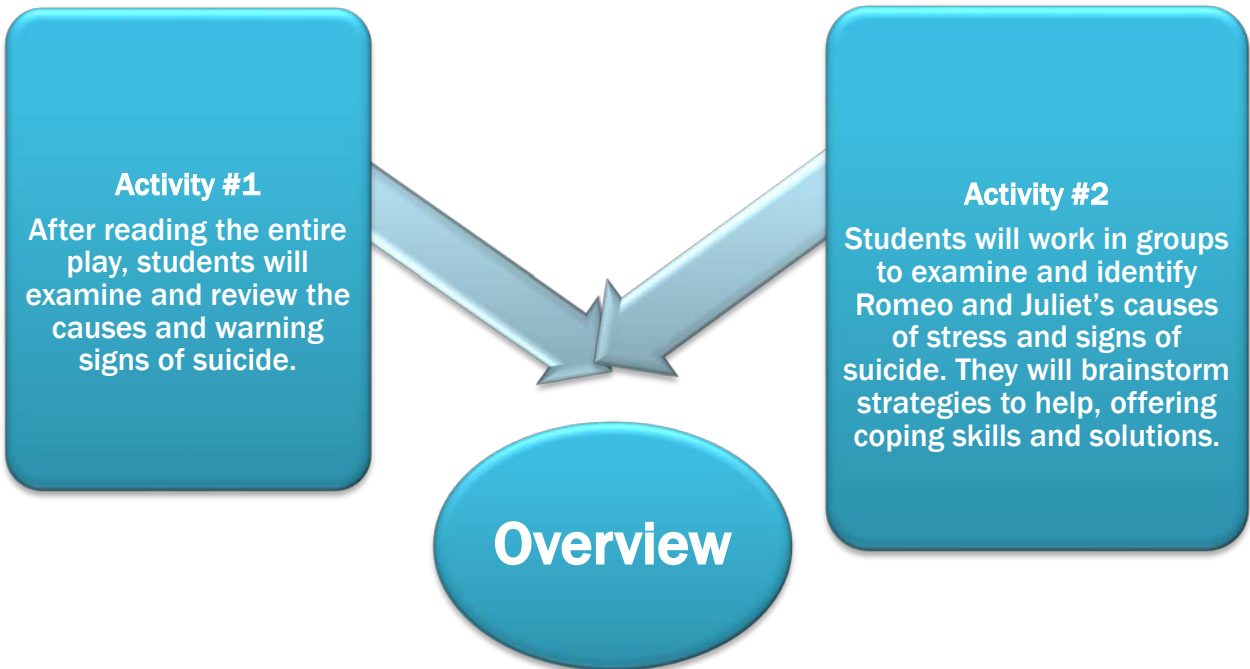


Romeo and Juliet – Preventing Teen Suicide



Grade Level	Subject Area	Curriculum Expectations and Learning Outcome			Time Needed	Space	Materials
7–12	English, Drama	Identify warning signs & symptoms that could be related to mental health concerns, and describe a variety of strategies for coping.	Analyse the text and explain how they help communicate meaning and enhance effectiveness.	Describe the challenges & struggles facing R & J that contributed to their eventual suicide, and apply effective strategies that could have prevented it.	1–2 class Periods	Desks in groups	Attached handouts of Activities

Activity 1: About Preventing Teen Suicide

Suicide is a complex and difficult topic. Many different factors contribute to what is the second most common cause of death among young people, after motor vehicle accidents.

On youth and suicide, the Canadian Mental Health Association says:

Suicide can appear to be an impulsive act. But it's a complicated process, and a person may think about it for some time before taking action. It's estimated that 8 out of 10 people who attempt suicide or die by suicide hinted about or made some mention of their plans. Often, those warning signs are directed at a friend.

Recognizing the warning signs is one thing; knowing what to do with that information is another. Suicide was a taboo subject for a very long time. Even talking about it is still difficult for most people. But being able to talk about suicide can help save a life. Learning about suicide is the first step in the communication process. Suicide is about escape. Someone who thinks seriously about suicide is experiencing pain that is so crushing, they feel that only death will stop it.

Suicide and Youth (2016, December 8) http://toronto.cmha.ca/mental_health/youth-and-suicide/#.WEnCdLrLcs

WARNING SIGNS

Considering suicide does not necessarily mean one is determined to die. A person contemplating suicide may present warning signs as a way of asking for help or to shed light on serious and painful circumstances.

Here are some warning signs to look for, as outlined by the Canadian Mental health Association:

- ◆ Sudden change in behaviour (for better or worse)
- ◆ Withdrawal from friends and activities
- ◆ Lack of interest
- ◆ Increased use of alcohol and other drugs
- ◆ Recent loss of a friend, family member or parent, especially if they died by suicide
- ◆ Conflicting feelings or a sense of shame about being gay or straight
- ◆ Mood swings, emotional outbursts, high level of irritability or aggression
- ◆ Feelings of hopelessness
- ◆ Preoccupation with death, giving away valued possessions
- ◆ Talk of suicide: e.g., “No one cares if I live or die”
- ◆ Making a plan or increased risk-taking
- ◆ Writing or drawing about suicide
- ◆ “Hero worship” of people who have died by suicide
- ◆ Behaviour is out of character, etc. (This list is not exhaustive.)

**WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU KNOW A
PERSON IS CONSIDERING SUICIDE?**

- ✓ Really listening, without judging, challenging or becoming angry or shocked
- ✓ Finding ways to break through the silence and secrecy
- ✓ Asking if the person has suicide plans or has made prior attempts
- ✓ Helping them find ways to lessen their pain
- ✓ Helping them see positive possibilities in their future
- ✓ Guiding them to other sources of help as soon as possible, such as a counsellor or other trusted adult, or community crisis telephone lines
- ✓ If someone is in crisis and you aren't sure what to do, you can always call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency room

ACTIVITY 2: *Romeo and Juliet* – Helping Romeo and Juliet

NOTE: This activity should be undertaken after reading the entire play.

1. Divide into five groups. Note: Acts 1 and 5 are combined because they are fairly short, while Act 3 is split into two sections because it is quite long.
2. Romeo and Juliet are trying to solve problems but are unable to do so and finally turn to suicide as the last option.

Read the soundbites in your section and answer the following questions:

- a. Identify the causes of stress in Romeo and Juliet's lives.
- b. What suicidal warning signs are Romeo and Juliet displaying?
- c. How do Romeo and Juliet handle their stress?
- d. Is there anyone in the play who is a good listener?
- e. Do you see evidence in the play of the following: bullying, criticizing, judging, peer pressure etc. (come up with your own)?
- f. What recommendations would you make to reduce their stress?
If you get stuck, use these sentences to help you get started:
 - i. The best way to help is...
 - ii. The best way to communicate is...
- g. Are there other quotes in the play, not listed in the soundbites, that might be considered warning signs?

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES: Act 1 / GROUP 1*

Scene 1

Romeo: Grievings of mine own lie heavy in my breast.

...

Romeo: Tut, I have lost myself, I am not here:
This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

...

Romeo: In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

...

Romeo: She hath forsworn to love, and in that vow
Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

Scene 2

Benvolio: Take thou some new infection to thy eye,
And the rank poison of the old will die.

Scene 4

Romeo: I fear too early, for my mind misgives
Some consequence yet hanging in the stars
Shall bitterly begin his fearful date
With this night's revels, and expire the term
Of a despised life closed in my breast,
By some vile forfeit of untimely death.

Scene 5

Romeo: O dear account! My life is my foe's debt.

...

Juliet: Prodigious birth of love it is to me
That I must love a loathed enemy.

*As Act 1 is fairly short, this group may also have Act 5.

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES – Act 2 / GROUP 2

Scene 1

Chorus: Now old desire doth in his death-bed lie,
And young affection gapes to be his heir;
That fair for which love groaned for and would die,

Scene 2

Juliet: The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

...

Romeo: My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

...

Romeo: Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!

Scene 4

Mercutio: Alas, poor Romeo, he is
already dead, stabbed with a white
wench's black eye, run through the
ear with a love-song, the very pin of
his heart cleft with the blind bow-boy's
butt-shaft; and is he a man to
encounter Tybalt?

Scene 3

Romeo: And bad'st me bury love.

...

Friar: For this alliance may so happy prove
To turn your households' rancour to pure love.

Scene 5

Juliet: Had she affections and warm youthful blood,
She would be as swift in motion as a ball;

Scene 6

Romeo: Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring Death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

Friar: These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
Which as they kiss consume.

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES – Act 3 / GROUP 3

Scene 1

Romeo: This day's black fate on moe days doth depend,
This but begins the woe others must end.

...

Romeo: Away to heaven, respective lenity,
And fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!

...

Romeo: Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

...

Romeo: O, I am fortune's fool!

Scene 3

Romeo: There is no world without Verona walls,
But purgatory, torture, hell itself;
Hence "banishèd" is banished from the world,
And world's exile is death; then "banishèd"
Is death mitermed. Calling death "banishèd,"
Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

...

Romeo: 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here
Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not.

...

And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
But "banishèd" to kill me?

...

Romeo: Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,
Doting like me, and like me banishèd,
Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair
And fall upon the ground as I do now,
Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

Scene 2

Juliet: Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,

...

Juliet: Vile earth, to earth resign, end motion here,
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier!

...

Juliet: There is no end, no limit, measure, bound,
In that word's death, no words can that woe sound.

...

Juliet: Come, cords, come, Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!

Scene 3 continued . . .

Nurse: Piteous predicament! Even so lies she,
Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubb'ring.

...

Nurse: O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,
And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,
And Tybalt calls, and then on Romeo cries,
And then down falls again.

...

Romeo: ...O, tell me, Friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? Tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion.

[Tries to stab himself but the dagger is snatched away]

Friar: Hold thy desperate hand!

Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art;
Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.

Unseemly woman in a seeming man,
And ill-beseeming beast in seeming both,
Thou hast amazed me! By my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better tempered.

...

Thy noble shape is but a form of wax,
Digressing from the valour of a man;

...

Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,
Misshapen in the conduct of them both,
Like powder in a skillless soldier's flask,
Is set afire by thine own ignorance,

...

A pack of blessings light upon thy back,
Happiness courts thee in her best array,
But like a mishavèd and sullen wench,
Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love.
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES – Act 3 Continued. . . / GROUP 4

Scene 5

Romeo: I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

...

Romeo: I have more care to stay than will to go;
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.

...

Romeo: More light and light, more dark, and dark our woes!

...

Juliet: O God, I have an ill-divining soul!
Methinks I see thee now, thou art so low,
As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

...

Romeo: Dry sorrow drinks our blood.

...

Lady C.: Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?
What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?
And if thou couldst, thou couldst not make him live;
Therefore have done. Some grief shows much of love,
But much of grief shows still some want of wit.

Juliet: Yet let me weep for such a feeling loss.

...

Juliet: Now, by Saint Peter's Church and Peter too,
He shall not make me there a joyful bride.

...

Capulet: How now, a conduit, girl? What, still in tears?

...

Lady C.: I would the fool were married to her grave!

...

Capulet: How, will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?
Is she not proud? Doth she not count her blest,
Unworthy as she is, that we have wrought
So worthy a gentleman to be her bride?

...

Capulet: Out, you green-sickness carrion! Out, you baggage!
You tallow-face!

...

Juliet: Good father, I beseech you on my knees,
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

[She kneels]

Capulet: Hang thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church a' Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face.

...

But now I see this one is one too much,
And that we have a curse in having her.

Scene 4

Lady C.: Tonight she's mewed up to her heaviness.

...

Capulet: Sir Paris, I will make a desperate tender
Of my child's love: I think she will be ruled
In all respects by me; nay more, I doubt it not.

Scene 5 continued . . .

Capulet: . . . I'll give you to my friend;
And you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.

...

Juliet: Is there no pity sitting in the clouds
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O sweet my mother, cast me not away!

...

Lady C.: Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee. *(Exits)*

Juliet: O God! – O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?
My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven;
How shall that faith return again to earth,
Unless that husband send it me from heaven
By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me!

...

Nurse: I think it best you married with the County.

...

Your first is dead, or 'twere as good he were
As living here and you no use of him.

...

Juliet: *[about the Nurse]*. . . Go, counsellor,
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.
I'll to the Friar to know his remedy;
If all else fail, myself have power to die.

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES – Act 4 / GROUP 5

Scene 3

Juliet: I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.

Scene 1

Paris: Now, sir, her father counts it dangerous
That she do give her sorrow so much sway;
And in his wisdom hastes our marriage
To stop the inundation of her tears,
Which, too much minded by herself alone,
May be put from her by society.

...

Paris: *[to Juliet]*
Thy face is mine, and thou has slandered it.

Juliet: It may be so, for it is not mine own.

...

Juliet: *[to Friar]*
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
...
Give me some present counsel, or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire, arbitrating that
Which the commission of thy years and art
Could to no issue of true honour bring.
Be not so long to speak, I long to die,
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

...

Friar: If, rather than to marry County Paris,
Thou has the strength of will to slay thyself,
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st with Death himself to scape from it;
And if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Juliet: O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of any tower,

...

Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud –

...

And I will do it without fear or doubt,
To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

...

Friar: *[on giving Juliet the sleeping potion]*
No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest.

Scene 5

Capulet: Death is my son-in-law, Death is my heir,
My daughter he hath wedded. I will die,
And leave him all; life, living, all is Death's.

...

Lady C.: Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!

...

Nurse: O day, O day, O day, O hateful day!

...

Paris: Beguiled, divorcèd, wrongèd, spited, slain!
Most detestable Death, by thee beguiled,
By cruel cruel thee quite overthrown!
O love! O life! Not life, but love in death!

Romeo and Juliet

SOUNDBITES – Act 5 / GROUP 1*

Scene 1

Romeo: I dreamt my lady came and found me dead.

...

Romeo: Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.

...

Romeo: ... let me have
A dram of poison

...

Romeo: Come, cordial and not poison, go with me
To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

Scene 3

Romeo: The time and my intents are savage-wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.

...

Romeo: Thou detestable maw, thou womb of death,

...

Paris: Obey and go with me, for thou must die.

Romeo: I must indeed, and therefore came I hither.

...

Romeo: ... Here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids; O, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,

...

Friar: I hear some noise, lady. Come from that nest
Of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep.

...

Juliet: O churl, drunk all, and left no friendly drop
To help me after?

...

Juliet: ... O happy dagger,
This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die.

...

Prince: This letter doth make good the Friar's words,
Their course of love, the tidings of her death;
And here he writes that he did buy a poison
Of a poor pothecary, and therewithal
Came to this vault, to die and lie with Juliet.
Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.
And I for winking at your discords too
Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished.

...

Prince: A glooming peace this morning with it brings,

...

For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

*As Act I is fairly short, this group may
also have Act 5.