



everychild.one voice.

Health, Wellness & Safety

Suicide Prevention

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Every two hours and eleven minutes a person under the age of twenty-five commits suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between nine and nineteen years of age according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surpassed only by accidents and homicide.

The tragedy of a young person dying because of overwhelming hopelessness or frustration is devastating to family, friends, and community. Parents, siblings, classmates, coaches, and neighbors might be left wondering if they could have done something to prevent that young person from turning to suicide.

Suicide rates differ between boys and girls. Girls think about and attempt suicide about twice as often as boys, and tend to attempt suicide by overdosing on drugs or cutting themselves. Yet boys die by suicide about four times as often as girls, perhaps because they tend to use more lethal methods, such as firearms, hanging, or jumping from heights.

The risk of suicide increases dramatically when kids and teens have access to firearms at home, and nearly 60% of all suicides in the United States are committed with a gun. That's why any gun in your home should be unloaded, locked, and kept out of the reach of children and teens.

WHY ARE TEENS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE?

Part of preventing teen suicide includes recognizing the issues that can trigger feelings of teen depression leading to suicidal thoughts and feelings such as:

- Hopelessness – feeling like things are bad and won't get any better
- Fear of losing control, going crazy, harming oneself or others
- Helplessness – a belief that there's nothing that can make life better
- Worthlessness – feeling useless and of no value
- Self-hate, guilt, or shame
- Extreme sadness or loneliness
- Anxiety or worry

There is pressure to fit in socially, to perform academically, and to act responsibly. Adolescence is also a time of sexual identity and relationships and a need for independence that often conflicts with the rules and expectations set by others.

WARNING SIGNS

- Expresses thoughts of death, dying and a desire to leave this life.
- Changes in normal habits, such as eating and sleeping, and spending less time with friends and family.
- Personality – behaving like a different person, becoming withdrawn, feeling tired all the time, not caring about anything.
- Start giving away treasured possessions to siblings or friends.
- Dramatic weight fluctuations, in any direction.
- Evidence of substance abuse.
- Dramatic mood swings.
- Lose interest in schoolwork and extracurricular activities.
- Engage in risk-taking behaviors.
- Write songs, poems, or letters about death, separation, and loss.

WATCH AND LISTEN

While all of these things are not necessarily indications of suicidal thoughts and feelings when taken separately, or happening rarely, a pattern can exhibit a serious problem, as can a combination of factors. Make sure that you take note of how often the above symptoms appear.

TAKE ACTION

If you learn that your child is thinking about suicide, get help immediately. Your doctor can refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist, or your local hospital's department of psychiatry can provide a list of doctors in your area. Your local mental health association or county medical society can also provide reference.

REFERENCES, RESOURCES TO CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Suicide Prevention Action Network USA
- National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Service, Rockville, MD)
- Safe2Tell (to make an anonymous report (877-542-7233)
- Colorado School Safety Resource Center (for school district workshops and training – www.safeschools.state.co.us)

**If you need immediate assistance contact the
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
Colorado Crisis & Support Line 1-844-493-8255**