



everychild.one voice.

## *Health, Wellness & Safety*

### *Suicide Prevention*

## **IF SUICIDE IS IMMINENT – TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION**

### **YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED WARNING SIGNS**

- A severe drop in school or work performance
- Change in personality and/or appearance
- Having mood swings
- Losing interest in things once cared about
- Having trouble concentrating or thinking clearly
- Changing normal routines – eating, sleeping
- Withdrawal from social contacts – friends, family
- Deep sadness, feeling hopeless, worthless, overwhelming sense of shame or guilt
- Doing reckless or self-destructive things
- Increase alcohol or drug use

*Partial List*

### **YOU MAY HAVE SUSPECTED**

- Talking about suicide and/or making suicide statements such as: “sometimes I wish I could just go to sleep and never wake up,” “you won’t have to worry about me much longer,” “it would be better if I wasn’t here,” “the family would be better off without me,” “I want to die,” or “I don’t care anymore.”
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Saying goodbye to family and friends without explanation
- Giving away personal belongings or getting affairs in order with no logical explanation
- Preoccupied with death, dying, or violence
- Getting the means to take one’s own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Writing songs, poems, or letters about death, separation, and loss

*Partial List*

## **BUT NOW IT MAY BE IMMINENT – DO NOT WAIST TIME – ACT**

### **Do not leave the individual alone or out of sight**

Find out whether the person is in danger of acting on suicide. Be sensitive. Do not be judgmental. Do not over react. Stay calm, but ask direct questions such as:

- How are you coping with what’s been happening in your life?
- Do you ever feel like just giving up?
- Are you thinking about dying?
- Are you thinking about hurting yourself?
- Are you thinking about suicide?

- Have you thought about how or when you'd do it?
- Do you have a gun or drugs?

If there is time seek assistance from a friend or family member to come immediately. Try not to handle the situation alone. Remember, do not leave the person alone or out of sight.

#### **IF WARRANTED, IMMEDIATELY:**

- Call 911
- Call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255** to reach a trained counselor. Use the same number and press "1" to reach the Veterans Crisis Line
- Call the **Colorado Crisis and Support Line (844) 493-8255**
- If you have assistance, and think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room

#### **OFFER SUPPORT**

- Be respectful and acknowledge the person's feelings. Don't try to talk the person out of their feelings or express shock. Not respecting how the person feels can shut down communication.
- Don't be patronizing or judgmental.
- Listen and offer reassurance that you are there and you care.

You are not responsible for preventing someone from taking his or her own life – but your intervention may help the person see that other options are available to stay safe and get treatment.

#### **REFERENCES, RESOURCES TO CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Suicide & Suicide Thoughts – Mayo Clinic (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/in-depth/suicide/ARY-20044707>)
- Suicide & Suicide Thoughts: Teenagers – Mayo Clinic (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/suicide/in-depth/suicide/ART-20044707?pg=2>)
- TeensHealth.org – My Friend Is Talking About Suicide – What Should I do? (<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/talking-about-suicide.html?view=ptr&WT.ac=t-ptr>)
- TeensHealth.org – Suicide (<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/suicide.html?view=ptr&WT.a0=t-ptr>)
- 10 Things Parents Can Do to Prevent Suicide (<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Ten-Things-Parents-Can-Do-to-Prevent-Suicide.aspx>)