



Parent Alert Bulletin

Suicide Awareness & Prevention



October 2017

Suicide is the SECOND leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24. Suicide IS PREVENTABLE!

Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs of their distress.

PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND FRIENDS are in a key position to pick up on these signs and get help.

Suicide Risk Factors

(Certain characteristics are associated with increased suicide risk)

- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Isolation & aloneness
- Mental illness (including depression, conduct disorders & substance abuse)
- Family stress/dysfunction
- Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home
- Situational crises (e.g., death of a loved one, bullying/harassment, breakup of a relationship/friendship, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, suicide of a peer)

Protective & Resiliency Factors

(These can lessen the effects of risk factors)

- Family and peer support
- School and community connectedness
- Healthy problem-solving skills
- Easy access to effective medical and mental health services

90% of individuals who die by suicide experienced a mental health condition.

Know the warning signs!



Suicide Warning Signs

(Most suicidal youth demonstrate observable behaviors signaling suicidal thinking)

- Suicidal threats in the form of direct (e.g., "I am going to kill myself") and indirect (e.g., "I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up again") statements
- Suicide notes and plans (including ongoing postings)
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions)
- Preoccupation with death
- Prior suicidal behavior
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings



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Talking to your Youth about Suicide



October 2017

Tips for Talking to Your Youth

*“Contrary to myth, talking about suicide **CANNOT** plant the idea in someone’s head!
It can actually open up communication about a topic that is often kept secret.”*
(Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide)

Timing is everything:

Pick a time when you have the best chance of getting their attention

Prepare what you want to say and rehearse:

“I was reading in the paper that youth suicide has been increasing...” OR
“I saw your school is having a program for teachers on suicide prevention.”

Be honest:

If this is a hard subject for you to talk about, admit it! By acknowledging your discomfort, you give your child permission to acknowledge his/her discomfort, too.

Be direct!

Ask for your child’s response. “What do you think about suicide?”;
“Is it something your friends talk about?”

Listen to what your child has to say:

If you hear something that worries you, be honest about that too.

Don’t overreact or underreact:

Overreaction will close off any future communication on the subject.
Under reacting, especially in relation to suicide, is often just a way to make ourselves feel better.

Suicide can happen to ANY kid in ANY family at ANY time. ANY thoughts or talk of suicide should ALWAYS be revisited!

Resources

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) OR Text ‘TALK’ 741-741

Crisis Center of Birmingham: 205-323-7777 OR Text 205-328-5465

Trevor Project Lifeline: 866-488-7386 OR Text ‘TREVOR’ 202-304-1200

Out of the Darkness Walk

November 5, 2017 1:00-3:30

Heardmont Park - 5458 Cahaba Valley Rd - Birmingham, AL

For more information: Dana Roberts 205-369-5297

ootdwalk.al@gmail.com

Sponsored by HCS District Intervention Team