

Suicide Awareness Tips

Facts:

- According to the CDC, **8%** of American teens **will attempt suicide** per year.
- Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death for children and youths aged 10 to 24.
- When people are thinking about hurting themselves they *want someone to ask questions/show support*.

Suicide warning signs for depressed teens:

- Talking/joking about or threatening suicide
- Saying things like, “I’d be better off dead,” “I wish I could disappear forever,” or “There’s no way out.”
- Speaking positively about death or romanticizing dying (“If I died, people might love me more”)
- Writing stories and poems about death, dying, or suicide
- Engaging in reckless behavior or having a lot of accidents resulting in injury
- Giving away prized possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family as if for the last time
- Seeking out weapons, pills, or other ways to kill themselves

Tips for talking to teens about depression and/or suicide:

Actively listen to the student(s) and validate what they feel (do not lecture)

- Listening without judgement creates an opportunity to learn more about what’s going on & shows support; listening, *without commenting*, validates their feelings

Try not to freak out

- Listen, stay calm, ask clarifying questions to better understand & validate the student’s feelings
- *Don’t* minimize the statements that are being shared.

Don’t be afraid of talking about mental health and/or suicide

- Talking openly and honestly with students will *NOT* put the idea into a kid’s head; ask direct questions.

Be gentle but persistent

- Validate concerns, but also emphasize the need for support
- Do *NOT* promise any student that you will not tell anyone – we are all mandated reporters!

Take care of yourself

- To help a depressed teen, you need to stay healthy & positive; don’t ignore your needs.
- The stress of the situation can affect your own moods/emotions, so cultivate your well-being by eating right, getting enough sleep, and making time for things you enjoy.

Say things like:

- **What’s wrong?**
- **How can I help?**
- **Are you thinking about hurting yourself?**
- **Are you thinking about killing yourself?**

Sample responses if a student answers with “Yes” to self-harm and/or thoughts of suicide:

- I am sorry you are feeling so bad.
- How can I help?
- We will get through this together. Let’s keep you safe.
- We all have our ups and downs, but this seems like more than that.

DON’T say things like:

- “That’s crazy!” or “that boy/girl is not worth killing yourself over” or “you’re just trying to get attention” or “you’re not going to kill yourself”

Trust your gut! Report concerning behaviors/statements to Guidance.

You can make a difference!

Crisis Hotlines / Youth Suicide Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255) (24-hour)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

An online chat option is available at

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>

National Suicide Hotline (24-hour)

1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)

Samaritans Statewide Befriending Line

1-877-870-HOPE (4673) (24-hour)

www.samaritanshope.org/get-help

Crisis Text Line

www.crisistextline.org

Crisis Text Line provides free emotional support and information to teens in any type of crisis, including feeling suicidal. You can text with a trained specialist 24 hours a day. Text “CTL” or “LISTEN” to 741-741.

American Association of Suicidology

www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)

www.afsp.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)

www.sprc.org