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