

What to Do to Prevent Suicide

If you spot any of the signs, symptoms or cries for help, do not waste time. Step in right away and do whatever it takes to prevent a child from acting on impulse and taking his/her life. Here is something you can and should do right away: Talk and encourage the child to talk.

It is important to:

- Acknowledge an understanding of the child's problems and emotions and reduce the feeling of isolation
- Help the child gain perspective and dilute some of the painful feelings
- Take the child seriously; reassure him/her without dismissing feelings
- Studies have shown 70 percent of young suicide victims were waiting to be punished, so parents/guardians should give consequences immediately, rather than threaten them in the future
- Restrict access to anything the child can use to harm himself/herself
- Maintain eyesight supervision – Do not say, "Go to your room." Instead, encourage the child to sit with you.
- Document everything (risk indicators, symptoms, motives, how you intervened, how the child responded, other safety measures, people you notified)
- Make sure to follow up with a mental health professional
- Consider hospitalization, which may be necessary to ensure safety
- Urge the child to log on to www.TeenCentral.com
- Call a suicide prevention hotline, mental health professional or facility for advice (*see back cover*)



About KidsPeace

For over 135 years, KidsPeace has been building on its expertise to give hope, help and healing to children, adults and those who love them throughout the United States. Through its comprehensive range of residential treatment programs; accredited educational services; unique psychiatric hospital and foster care and community-based programs, KidsPeace is dedicated to helping people connect, transform and overcome their challenges to ensure a stable future, transition to adulthood and gain independence. Since its doors opened in 1882, more than 200,000 children have participated in one of the multitude of programs KidsPeace offers.

National Resources

TeenCentral.com is an award-winning, free, safe and anonymous site for teens to find help with some of today's most difficult challenges. Users are unidentifiable, and they receive answers online within 24 hours. There are many features and useful resources that allow for a positive online experience.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline connects individuals in suicidal crisis to the nearest available suicide prevention and mental health service provider through a toll-free telephone number 800-273-TALK (8255). www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

For additional resources or more information on how to get involved, become a foster parent or make a donation, please visit www.kidspeace.org.

On the Web

www.kidspeace.org
www.TeenCentral.com
www.fostercare.com
www.facebook.com/kidspeace.org
www.twitter.com/KidsPeace
www.healingmagazine.org



KidsPeace is accredited by The Joint Commission in Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania. KidsPeace does not discriminate in regard to admissions in terms of sex, race, creed, color, national origin, LEP (Limited English Proficiency), religious beliefs, disabilities or handicapping conditions. KidsPeace is a drug-free workplace. We respect our clients' privacy. The model(s) represented in this publication is(are) for illustrative purposes only and in no way represent or endorse KidsPeace.

© 2018 KidsPeace other than stock photography.



002-0039



SUICIDE PREVENTION: Facts, signs and intervention



Children are very vulnerable to the growing complexities and uncertainties of our world. Many children feel lost, scared or overwhelmed because they do not have enough experience coping with difficult problems.

Too many kids suffer abuse and neglect, bullying and domestic violence, eating disorders, peer pressure and fears of natural disasters and terrorism. The resulting strain is unprecedented and can sometimes become too much to bear. When this happens, kids seek means of escape and, in the most severe cases, may even turn to suicide to free themselves from the pain or despair they are suffering.

Statistics speak louder than words:

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people 15 to 24 years of age*
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US for all ages.**
- On average, a young person (age 15-24) dies by suicide every 2 hours and 12 minutes



• Between 1999 and 2016 the total suicide rate increased 28 percent*



• 17 percent of students in grades 9-12 have seriously considered suicide (13.6 percent have reported creating a plan; 8 percent have reported trying to take their own life in the past 12 months)***

*According to nimh.nih.gov **According to afsp.org ***According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Recognizing the Risk Indicators for Youth Suicide

Awareness of characteristics associated with contemplating or attempting suicide improves the chances of spotting warning signs in time to prevent a child's suicide. The most important risk factors include:

- A previous suicide attempt
- A suicide or attempted suicide by a family member or friend
- Alcohol/drug disorders
- Serious medical problems that may be life-threatening or life-changing
- Major psychiatric diagnosis
- A loss of any kind – real or symbolic
- History of impulsive or erratic behavior
- History of family problems; few or no friends
- Toxic relationships that could cause stress, volatility or contagion of self-destructive behavior
- Trouble talking about problems or lack of communication
- History of frustration and conflicts with important people
- Perpetual feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- History of abuse
- Presence of a learning disability
- Easy access to potential weapons: guns, razor blades, sharp objects, medication

Spotting Warning Signs

There are many signs and symptoms that might provide clues that a child is contemplating or planning to attempt suicide. Consider all threats to be valid. The most important signals to look for are:

- Prolonged periods of sadness, despair and hopelessness
- Increased irritability, anger or rage
- Increased isolation- withdrawal from family, friends, activities or poor performance in school
- Increased use of substances, problems with authority
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns, giving away belongings or bizarre behavior
- Suicidal thoughts, actions or threats

What to do if it's you

- Remember that these feelings are not permanent and can pass, even when they feel like they won't
- Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings- if you are feeling worse, seek help
- Place yourself around safe people you trust
- Remove yourself from unsafe objects
- Seek professional help
- Remember that the TeenCentral Help page has a list of available resources and helplines
- Call the National Suicide Hotline- the number is 1-800-273-TALK. Program it in your phone for emergencies

What to do if it's someone you love

- Let them know that these feelings are not permanent and can pass
- Ask specifically if they are thinking of killing themselves
- Stay with them- listen to them non-judgmentally
- Remove unsafe objects
- Encourage them to seek professional help - offer to go with them
- Give them the number for the National Suicide Hotline- 1-800-273-TALK and encourage them to call

Some things to stay away from

- Don't ignore how you feel- if you are having suicidal thoughts, don't be afraid to seek help. These feelings can worsen quickly
- Don't ignore signs and symptoms in those you love and don't shy away from talking about suicide. Often the person who is feeling suicidal wants to talk but doesn't know how. You will never put suicidal thoughts into someone's head simply by talking about it
- Don't use guilt - remember that often a suicidal person already feels increased guilt
- Don't leave the person alone

...that although you do want to keep an eye out for these signs, they are only risk indicators - they don't always mean that someone is suicidal.

Remember...