

FACTS ABOUT

Teen Suicide

Information for Family and Friends of Teens



Each year in the US, thousands of teenagers complete suicide. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds, and the sixth leading cause of death for 5-to-14-year-olds.

Teenagers experience strong feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, and other fears while growing up. For some teenagers, divorce, the formation of a new family with step-parents and step-siblings, or moving to a new community can be very unsettling and can intensify self-doubts.

Teenagers face unique challenges. They are at a crucial time of development in their lives when they find themselves thrown into an adult world without many of the coping skills that adults may have available.

Suicide isn't the problem. A teen considering suicide may consider suicide a solution to a problem that they believe is unsolvable. Often times preventing a suicide or stopping a suicide attempt is as simple as listening, caring and offering support. You don't have to be able to solve a teenager's problems but you can offer hope by being willing to support them and help them work through the problems they are encountering.

To adults, it may seem like a teen is "crying wolf," and "things can't possibly be that bad." It's important to note that whenever a teen talks about suicide, it needs to be taken seriously. If a teen talks about suicide, ask questions and offer support. If the teen won't talk with you, find someone they can talk to like a school counselor or a mental health professional.

Warning Signs

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Missing school
- Sudden decline in school performance
- Loss of interest in activities (sports, clubs, etc.)
- Change in sleep patterns (sleeping more or less)
- Change in appetite and/or weight
- Over-reaction to criticism
- Unexplainable rage or anger
- Indecision, lacking concentration

Verbal Cues

"Nothing is worth the effort."
"You won't have me to worry about soon."

Risk Factors

Previous suicidal behavior
Loss of parent, family member or friend
Traumatic childhood experiences



SUICIDE PREVENTION
FOUNDATION

Sources of Help

Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation

<http://www.suicidepreventionfoundation.org>
(970) 683-6626

National Institute of Mental Health

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org