

SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

Cats Connected: Suicide Prevention Awareness

IN THIS ISSUE

Adolescents and Suicide

By: Suicide Prevention Resource Center at <http://www.sprc.org/populations/adolescents> and the National Alliance on Mental Illness at <https://www.nami.org/>

Regardless of age, gender, or background, suicide can affect anyone. Each year, more than 41,000 people die by suicide.

Adolescence is a time of change, and with that change many teenagers experience stress from relationships with friends and family members, as well as face problems at school. Many high school students report thinking about suicide, and in 2015, suicide was the second leading cause of death among ages 10 to 24 years.

Risk and Protective Factors

Suicide prevention efforts seek to reduce the suicide risk factors for teens and strengthen the factors that help protect them from suicide. For example,

Risk Factors:

- 🐾 Depression and other mental health problems
- 🐾 Alcohol or drug use
- 🐾 Feeling of social isolation

- 🐾 Difficult life situations (abuse, bullying, poverty)

Protective factors:

- 🐾 Life skills (problem-solving, coping)
- 🐾 Social support from family, friends, and others
- 🐾 Positive school experiences

Honest conversations about suicide, even just one, can change a life.



Warning Signs for Suicide

Learn the Immediate Risk and Serious Risk Warning Signs.

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Myth vs. Fact: Take the Quiz

Learn the commonly held incorrect beliefs about suicide.

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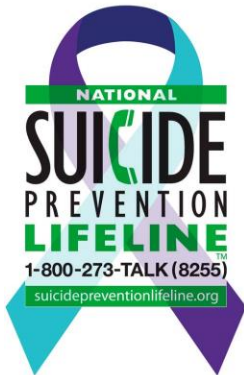
Warning Signs for Suicide

By: Suicide Resource Prevention Center
at <http://www.sprc.org/about-suicide/warning-signs>

Immediate Risk

Some behaviors may indicate that a person is at immediate risk for suicide.

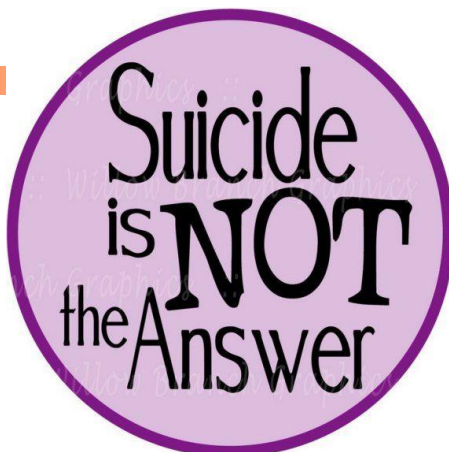
- 🐾 Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- 🐾 Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- 🐾 Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live



Serious Risk

Other behaviors may also indicate a serious risk – especially if the behavior is new; has increased; and/or seems related to a painful event, loss or change.

- 🐾 Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- 🐾 Talking about being a burden to others
- 🐾 Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- 🐾 Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- 🐾 Sleeping too little or too much
- 🐾 Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- 🐾 Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- 🐾 Displaying extreme mood swings



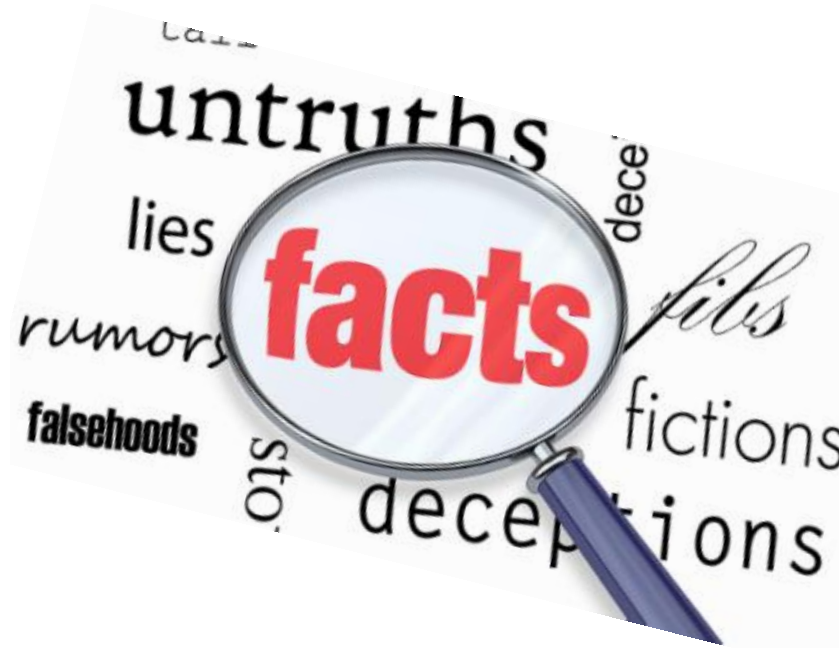
The WPHS SAFE Program needs your help to bring bullying prevention, suicide prevention, and drug and alcohol prevention programs to our students. If you would like to make a donation to implement these programs, please go to schoolpay.com. Your support may save a life.

Myth vs. Fact: Take the Quiz

By: The Jason Foundation at <http://prp.jasonfoundation.com/facts/common-myths/>

Commonly held myths of suicide create a barrier to helping those who are in danger. Removing those myths will help the teens who are in danger be identified and receive the help that is needed.

1. People who talk about suicide won't really do it.
Myth or Fact
2. If a person is determined to kill him/herself, nothing is going to stop him/her.
Myth or Fact
3. Talking about suicide may give someone the idea.
Myth or Fact
4. People who attempt suicide and do not complete suicide are just trying to get attention and are not really serious.
Myth or Fact



Statements 1 – 4 are Myths. Let's look at the Facts:

1. Almost everyone who attempts or completes suicide has given warning signs through their words or behaviors. Statements like "You'll be sorry when I'm dead" or "I wish I was dead" – no matter how casually or jokingly they were said – may indicate serious suicidal feelings. Talking about suicide provides the opportunity for communication, and when a teen can share their fears, those fears may diminish.
2. Even the most severely depressed person has mixed feelings about death, wavering until the very last moment between wanting to live and die. Most suicidal people do not want to die; they want the pain to stop. The impulse to end their life, however overpowering, does not last forever.
3. You do not give a person ideas about suicide by talking about it. The opposite is true. If a person is depressed or unhappy, discussing their feelings openly and allowing them to express how they feel is one of the most helpful things you can do. Even if a person has had suicidal thoughts, giving them permission to express those thoughts can relieve some of the anxiety and provide an avenue to recognize other ways to escape their pain and sadness.
4. To a certain degree, they are trying to get attention and help for the pain they are experiencing. A suicide attempt, even half-hearted, is an attempt to seek help. If the person perceives their action to be a suicide attempt, then that is what it is. Any attempt, regardless of severity, must be taken seriously and help must be sought for the person.



My Friend is Talking about Suicide: What Can I Do?

By: Teen Health from Nemours at <http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/talking-about-suicide.html>

Sometimes, a specific event, stress, or crisis – like a relationship breaking up or a death in the family — can trigger suicidal behavior in a friend who is already feeling depressed and showing the warning signs. Here's what you can do to help your friend:

Ask

If you have a friend who is talking about suicide or showing other warning signs, don't wait to see if he or she starts to feel better. Talk about it. Most of the time, people who are considering suicide are willing to discuss it if someone asks them out of concern and care.

Some people (both teens and adults) are reluctant to ask teens if they have been thinking about suicide or hurting themselves. That's because they're afraid that, by asking, they may plant the idea of suicide. This is not true. It is always a good thing to ask.

Starting the conversation with someone you think may be considering suicide helps in many ways. First, it allows you to get help for the person. Second, just talking about it may help the person to feel less alone, less isolated, and more cared about and understood — the opposite of the feelings that may have led to suicidal thinking to begin with. Third, talking may provide a chance to consider that there may be another solution.

Asking someone if he or she is having thoughts about suicide can be difficult. Sometimes it helps to let your friend know why you are asking.

For instance, you might say, "I've noticed that you've been talking a lot about wanting to be dead. Have you been having thoughts about trying to kill yourself?"

Listen

Listen to your friend without judging and offer reassurance that you're there and you care. If you think your friend is in immediate danger, stay close — make sure he or she isn't left alone.

Tell

Even if you're sworn to secrecy and you feel like you'll be betraying your friend if you tell, you should still get help. Share your concerns with an adult you trust as soon as possible. You can also call the toll-free number for a suicide crisis line (like 1-800-SUICIDE) or a local emergency number (911).

The important thing is to notify a responsible adult. Although it may be tempting to try to help your friend on your own, it's always safest to get help.

