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Suicide Prevention

MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



Together, We Can Help Prevent Suicide

Believe

Everyone has a role to play in preventing suicide. Suicide is a major public health concern and a leading cause of death in the United States. Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others. In a recent federal survey, 4 in 10 high school students reported feeling "persistently sad or hopeless," while 1 in 5 said they'd thought about suicide. As your child grows into pre-teens and teenagers, it becomes challenging for parents to know the difference between normal up's and down's versus cause for concern. Parents should familiarize themselves with the warning signs and risk factors for suicide as well as increase the protective factors that will help protect your child.

Protective Factors

Protective factors are personal and environmental characteristics that lower the likelihood of negative outcomes. For example, when an individual feels connected to family, community, and social institutions, this is considered a protective factor. By increasing protective factors, the risk of suicide decreases. Parents, look for ways to increase the protective factors in your child such as increasing self-esteem and a sense of purpose or meaning in life. Focusing on cultural, religious, or personal beliefs also helps discourage suicide. Other protective factors include life skills such as problem solving, coping skills, and the ability to adapt to change.

#BeThe1To help one another!

5 Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain

1. ASK
2. KEEP THEM SAFE
3. BE THERE
4. HELP THEM CONNECT
5. STAY CONNECTED

How to have a #RealConvo

It can be challenging to know how to talk to children that are experiencing suicidal thoughts. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention has started a new campaign, **#RealConvo**, which includes articles and resources to help aid students and parents in understanding how to talk to those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts. You don't need to be an expert to have an authentic conversation around mental health. Having real conversations with those you love creates a human connection and can save a life! Click [here](#) to learn more!

Featured articles

Know the Warning Signs

What are the signs of suicide that we often see in children and teenagers? First, it is important to understand the mental health disorders that can lead to suicide. Conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and substance abuse make it more likely for a young person to contemplate suicide. If your child is struggling with one of these disorders or you suspect they might be, don't hesitate to contact your pediatrician to ask for help! Other risk factors include:

- Experience a sudden loss: death, break up, divorce, incarceration
- Social pressures related to sexual orientation or gender identity
- Racism
- Depression
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Alcohol and substance use
- Previous attempts
- Loss of a loved one, friend, or acquaintance to suicide
- Easy access to firearms or other life-threatening items
- Bullying, cyberbullying, discrimination
- Serious financial problems

What Parents Can Do

If you see signs your child's mental health is under stress, there are several things parents can do to help.

- **Tune in** - connect with your child both physically and emotionally. Seek opportunities to talk with them, show sincere interest in their lives. Stay connected!
- **Listen** - watch for signs of suicide. Listen to your child even when they are not talking, by watching their behaviors, change in patterns or social activities.
- **Don't dismiss comments** - many kids who attempt will tell their parents or friends ahead of time through an alarming phrase like, "Nothing matters." or "Everyone would be better off without me."

For a more complete list click [here](#).

What resources should you use?

- Check out [ParentGuidance.org](https://www.parentguidance.org) for a course on "How Parents Can Help Prevent Suicide" and other topics to help you help your child.
- Talk to a school counselor or therapist. If your child is struggling with mental illness or trauma, a school counselor or therapist is a great resource.
- Talk to your general practitioner! They can help diagnose mental illness or refer you to someone who can.
- Check out mylifewisorthliving.org for an animated series on teen suicide. Watching this with your children can help them realize they are not alone.

Calling for Help - Who and When



Did you know...You don't need to be in crisis to call a crisis lifeline! A crisis line is 24/7 emotional support for anyone in crisis. So WHO should call the helpline? If you are worried about a friend or family member or you are seeking guidance and support, YOU can call the helpline for answers. People call to talk about a lot of things: substance abuse, economic worries, relationships, sexual identity, illness, getting over abuse, depression, mental and physical illness, and loneliness. If you find yourself thinking about or worrying about someone you love, take the time to call and ask for guidance.

TEXT



The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 180 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices.

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