

Youth Suicide Prevention

Helping Your
Children



IDAHO
LIVES
PROJECT



Parents and Caregivers Make a Difference

Parents are often not in a good position to see the warning signs for suicide in their own children. Initially, youth are far more likely to disclose their intent to harm or kill themselves to their friends. However, they naturally look to trusted adults for help. Talk to your children. As parents, this is the most important thing we can do. Be persistent. Be willing to talk about suicide. Talking about suicide or suicidal thoughts will not push someone to kill themselves. Let them know suicide is not the answer to whatever they are going through.

Learn the Warning Signs

- Talking about, planning or threatening suicide
- Previous suicide attempts
- Agitation, especially combined with sleeplessness
- Withdrawal or isolation from friends, family or activities
- Nightmares

Be Aware of Risk Factors

Pressures such as unrealistic academic, social or family expectations can create a strong sense of rejection and can lead to deep disappointment. Teens and young adults are especially prone to feelings of loneliness, hopelessness and rejection as a result of these pressures.

Depression in young people can be difficult to detect. It is extremely important that depressed youth receive prompt, professional treatment. Keep in mind that depression in young men often appears as anger, rage, aggression and getting into fights.

Abuse of Alcohol, Drugs or Sex are way some young people cope with feelings of depression or loneliness. However, such behaviors only lead to new problems and a deeper level of depression.

Isolation or Withdrawal can also be a coping strategy for a suicidal youth making them even more susceptible to loneliness, depression and substance abuse.

Other General Risk Factors

- Release from inpatient psychiatric hospitalization
- Mental health/substance use disorders
- Hopelessness
- History of trauma or abuse
- Family history of suicide
- Easy access to lethal means
- Lack of social support

Trust Your Gut

Knowing the warning signs for suicide can save a life. Be aware of the risk factors for youth suicide as well. Most suicidal people give some clues. By learning the warning signs, paying attention and trusting your judgment, you can make the difference between life and death.

Remember

Any one of these signs alone doesn't necessarily indicate a person is suicidal. However, all signs are reason for concern and several signals may be cause for concern of suicide. Warning signs are especially important if the person has attempted suicide in the past.



Means Matter

If deadly methods are not readily available, a suicidal person may delay or not make an attempt.

1

Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and their method can save a life.

2

Parents of youth at risk should temporarily remove firearms from the home and lock up medications and toxins.

3

Parents should communicate with physicians to ensure medications prescribed to youth are effective but not deadly when treating patients who are potentially suicidal.

4

Make sure youth don't have access to keys where medications, toxins or weapons are stored.

Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Idaho State Department of Education

Idaho Lives Project

(208) 332-6816

idaholives.org



If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health or suicide crisis, contact the Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline: Call (800) 273-8255 or Text (208) 398-4357

Much of the information here is courtesy of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Visit their website for more information on suicide prevention for schools at www.sprc.org

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