

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 and listen without judgement. As parents, this is the most important thing we can do. Be willing to talk about suicide. Talking about suicide or suicidal thoughts will not push someone to kill themselves. Let them know they are not alone and you are there for them no matter what 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
- Unexplained or increases in anger or irritability
- Feelings of hopelessness or burdensomeness
- Nightmares in adolescents or older youth

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

Other Factors to Consider

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. Ensure youth know they belong and are accepted for who they are.

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 Self-Injury or Sex are ways some young people cope with feelings of depression or loneliness. However, such behaviors only lead to new problems and a deeper level of depression.

Recent Release from inpatient treatment is a time of significantly high risk for suicide death. Appropriate follow-up care after a young person has received inpatient treatment must include school re-entry plans and family involvement in recovery. For free follow-up services and support, contact BPA Health at (208)947-5155.

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.

Means Matter

Easy access to lethal means increases suicide risk and chances of death. Safe storage of weapons, drugs and other means saves lives.

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

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

Gun locks and medication lock boxes are available from the Idaho Lives Project.



Supporting documents and other resources for elements list in this brochure can be found at **idaholives.org**.



Youth Suicide Prevention Program

Youth Suicide Prevention & Safety Coordination
Idaho State Department of Education
Idaho Lives Project
(208) 332-6816
idaholives.org



Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline
by JANNUS

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional or suicide crisis, contact the Idaho Crisis & Suicide Hotline by calling or texting 988.

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

The Idaho Lives Project is a partnership between the Idaho State Department of Education and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. The Project is funded by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Suicide Prevention Program and the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

This publication was supported by Grant Number 2 801 OT 009017, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.