



TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTH SUICIDE?

Some risk factors for exhibiting suicidal behavior can include:

- Loss of significant other
- Problems at school
- Family and personal stress
- Substance abuse
- Depression or other mental health issues
- Previous suicide of peer or family member
- Questions regarding sexual orientation

Students who are having suicidal thoughts may exhibit a variety of symptoms including, but not limited to:

- Significant changes in behavior such as changes in appearance, in grades, in eating or sleeping habits, or withdrawing from friends.
- Making suicidal threats-either direct "I wish I were dead," indirect "things would be better if I were gone," or vague statements about death or not being around
- Appears sad or hopeless
- Reckless behavior
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Giving away prized possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family
- Making out a will

It is important to remember the signs and risk factors listed are generalities and not exhaustive lists. Not all students who contemplate or die by suicide will exhibit these kinds of symptoms AND not all students who exhibit these behaviors are suicidal.

WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP MY CHILD SAFE?

- **LISTEN.** Avoid making judging statements such as "you don't want to do that." Instead make statements such as "Help me understand what life is like for you right now".
- **ASK.** Talking about suicide does not make a student suicidal. Asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts give him/her permission to talk about it. Asking sends the message that you are concerned and want to help.
- **TAKE SIGNS SERIOUSLY.** Studies have found that more than 75% of people who die by suicide showed some of the warning signs in the weeks or months prior to their death.
- **GET HELP.** If you have concerns that your child is suicidal, seek immediate help from a mental health practitioner. Suicidal students need to be evaluated to assess risk and develop a treatment plan. Parents can contact school mental health professionals such as school psychologists, social workers, or counselors. Parents may also want to consult with their insurance company to obtain a list of mental health providers covered by their policy. When you call to make an appointment, tell the person on the phone that your child is suicidal and needs to be seen as soon as possible.
- **PROHIBIT ACCESS TO WEAPONS, PRESCRIPTIONS DRUGS, MEDICATION, AND OTHER MEANS.**
- **DO NOT LEAVE HIM OR HER ALONE.** It is important that parents surround themselves with supportive friends or family members who can stop in and help as needed.
- **REASSURE YOUR CHILD THAT LIFE CAN GET BETTER.** Many suicidal people have lost all hope that life can improve. They may have difficulty problem solving even simple issues. Remind your child that no matter how bad things are, the problem can be worked out. Offer your help.

EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Suicide Prevention Lifeline	1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)	www.reachout.com
Yellow Ribbon Hopeline Network	1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)	
Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health	Crisis Line (303)730-3303	Appointments:(303)730-8858
POLICE/ Emergency Medical Care	911	

For more information about depression and suicide:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	www.afsp.org
American Association of Suicidology	www.suicideology.org
National Mental Health Association	www.nmha.org
American Academy of Pediatrics	www.aap.org