

# Silence Kills

You know the warning signs but what do you do if you suspect a friend is thinking about suicide?

- Take them seriously. If your friend is always making jokes or casual comments about suicide, don't just blow it off. He may sound like he's just playing around but he may be asking for help.
- Don't avoid the subject. Many teens think that if you talk to a depressed friend about suicide, you're encouraging them to do it.
- That's a myth. The fact is, talking about suicide is the best way to prevent suicide. Ask them, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?" That will get the subject out in the open and give your friend a chance to talk about her feelings.
- Just talk. Your friend has a life worth living. Talk to him about all of the great things in his life- and remind him that, no matter how bad things seem, things always get better. Remind him that there are people who care about him.
- Get help. Tell a parent, a teacher, or another trusted adult about your friend- they can make sure she gets the help she needs. And don't leave her alone until you've told someone.

# Getting Better

Depression is hard to overcome, but with a close support group and self-control, you can turn things around. The next time you feel down, try one of these:

If you've lost someone close to you, instead of keeping it in and letting the grief take over, why not turn your loss into something positive? Use what you learned in coping with loss to counsel others experiencing a similar situation.

- Do something you've always been afraid to do. Take an acting class, or train for a marathon. Focusing on a challenging new goal can be a great way to get over depression.
- Talk to someone. Sometimes, just telling someone how you feel can make a big difference. Talk to a friend or family member instead of keeping your feelings bottled up.
- Get creative. Put your feelings in writing, maybe through poetry or fiction. Try painting or sketching when you feel down. Write a song. Dance. Art and music can be great ways to express your feelings.
- Talk about it with professionals who have experience in helping severe depression. Check out the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at <http://www.afsp.org/>. They have several programs, including support groups, led by physicians and other who know how to help.

# Test Your Knowledge

Think you know about suicide? Read the statements below and determine if they are true or false.

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death among teens.

A. True B. False

You should never talk to someone about suicide if you think they want to do it.

A. True B. False

Most suicides are impulsive acts, and no one can predict when a friend will do it.

A. True B. False

Talking about your depression with friends will help you overcome it faster.

A. True B. False

If someone jokes about killing themselves, they might be thinking about actually doing it.

A. True B. False

Answers: 1. A; 2. B; 3. B; 4. A; 5. a

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# ADOLESCENT HEALTH PROGRAMS

- *Anti-Bullying and Suicide Prevention*
- *STD/HIV Teen Pregnancy Prevention (It's a Girl Thing, Making Proud Choices)*
- *Teen Drug Prevention*



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There's no single cause for suicide. Suicide most often occurs when stressors and health issues converge to create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide, and it is often undiagnosed or untreated. Conditions like depression, anxiety and substance problems, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide. Yet it's important to note that most people who actively manage their mental health conditions go on to engage in life.

## How Do I Know Someone's Thinking About It?

### Talk

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

### Behavior

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for methods
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue

## Mood

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

## Suicide Risk Factors

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take their life.

## Health Factors

- Mental health conditions
- Depression
- Substance use problems
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Personality traits of aggression, mood changes and poor relationships
- Conduct disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Serious physical health conditions including pain  
Traumatic brain injury

## Environmental Factors

- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- Prolonged stress, such as harassment, bullying, relationship problems or unemployment
- Stressful life events, like rejection, divorce, financial crisis, other life transitions or loss  
Exposure to another person's suicide, or to graphic or sensationalized accounts of suicide.

## Historical Factors

- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide  
Childhood abuse, neglect or trauma  
Where To Turn for Help

## IF YOU ARE A TEEN THAT NEEDS HELP CALL

## National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

We can all help prevent suicide.

**1-800-273-8255**



This person will listen to you, understand how your problem is affecting you, provide support, and get you the help you need.

**Lifeline Center calls are free and confidential, and we're available 24/7.**



**Everyone Plays A Role In Suicide Prevention**

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