

Understanding When Your Child May Be Suicidal and Ways To Help

IS YOUR CHILD THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?

Warning Signs of Suicide:

Severe

- ? Talks or writes about wanting to die
- ? Has attempted suicide before
- ? Gives away personal possessions



Concerning

- ? Sudden or extreme changes in mood, both positive and negative.
- ? Sudden changes in behavior at home: (example - Starts arguments with family.)
at school: (example - Grades go down quickly.)
with peers: (example - Ends friendships.)
- ? Impulsive behaviors: (examples - using drugs/alcohol, criminal activity, risky sex.)
- ? Signs of depression: (examples - looking sad, changes in sleeping/eating patterns, loss of interest in activities/friends/appearance, irritable/angry mood, more tired than usual, statements about feeling hopeless, negative statements about self.)

IF SO, WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Assess for safety. Can your child be alone?

- Don't be afraid to ask! Talking about suicide doesn't make teenagers do it. Be direct. Ask: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"
- Show concern and stay calm.
- Encourage them to express their feelings.
- Show them that you understand them from their point of view.
- Be non-judgmental. Avoid lecturing or trying to convince them to live.
- Don't try to offer quick solutions. You're not going to fix the problem immediately. The best thing to do is LISTEN.
- Offer hope that options other than suicide are available.

Take Action

- If you feel your child is safe, offer your child company. If he or she wants space, check in with them on a regular basis (e.g. every 30 min) to make sure things are ok.
- Remove weapons, knives, razor blades, pills, linens, or any other item your child could use to harm his or herself.

****Encourage your child to page his or her therapist**

- There are suicide hotlines available 24/7: 1-800-SUICIDE, 1-800-273-TALK
En Español - 1-877-298-3373

If you decide that your child is **not safe**, the best course of action may be to **call 911** or **take your child to the emergency room** to ensure your child's safety.

*Courtesy of the Adolescent Depression and Suicide Program
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REFERRALS: (718)-920-5466*

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