

# Let's Talk.... About Suicide

## **Concern for a friend**

Everyone feels sad, depressed, or angry sometimes — especially when the pressures or struggles of school, friends, and family become too much to handle. But sometimes these feelings of sadness or hopelessness just won't go away. These feelings may begin to affect school, relationships and the way a person looks at life in general—as though nothing really matters anymore. Sometimes when people find themselves in an emotional black hole, or constantly irritated or anxious they may begin to think about suicide. Everyone can play a role in preventing suicide by being aware of the warning signs of suicidal behaviors:

## **Warning Signs of Suicide**

Warning signs that someone may be thinking of suicide include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself, or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Talking about “going away”
- Feeling hopeless
- Showing rage or uncontrolled anger; talking about seeking revenge
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities – seemingly without thinking
- Withdrawing or isolating from friends or family, losing the desire to go out
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Trouble concentrating or thinking clearly
- Changes in eating habits (eating much more, or less, than usual)
- Changes in sleeping habits (sleeping much more, or less, than usual)
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Displaying extreme mood swings (way down one day, way up the next)
- Giving away prized possessions

The more of these signs a person shows, the greater the risk of suicide.

## **What to Do**

### **if Immediate Risk of Suicide:**

If you believe someone is in immediate risk of suicide:

1. Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. This will *not* put the idea in their head, or make them likely to attempt suicide.
2. **Do not leave the person alone.**

3. Remove any objects that could be used in a suicide attempt(guns, pills, sharp objects)
4. Call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK/8255**
5. Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional.

### **What to Do if Someone is Showing Warning Signs:**

This person may need you right now to help them to get help. Don't keep these kinds of secrets - **ACT!\***

### **Acknowledge**

If you have a friend who is talking about suicide or showing other warning signs, don't wait to see if he or she starts to feel better. Acknowledge your friend's pain and them about what's going on in their life. Most of the time, people who are considering suicide are willing to discuss it if someone asks them out of concern and care.

Some people are reluctant to ask teens if they have been thinking about suicide or hurting themselves. They may be afraid that, by asking, they may plant the idea of suicide. This is NOT true. It is always a good thing to acknowledge someone's pain and ask them about it.

Starting the conversation with someone you think may be considering suicide helps in many ways:

- It allows you to get help for the person.
- Just talking about it may help the person to feel less alone, less isolated, more cared about, and understood — the opposite of the feelings that may have led to suicidal thinking to begin with.
- Talking may provide a chance to consider that there may be another solution. Asking someone if he or she is having thoughts about suicide can be difficult. Sometimes it helps to let your friend know why you are asking. For instance, you might say, "I've noticed that you've been talking a lot about wanting to be dead. Have you been having thoughts about trying to kill yourself?"

### **Care**

Show you care by listening. So much of what being a friend is about has to do with being there for each other. When in pain, what most of us need is a friend to listen without judging and to offer realistic hope. If you think your friend is in immediate danger, stay close – make sure he or she isn't left alone

### **Tell**

Even if they try to swear you to secrecy, and you feel like you'll be betraying your friend if you tell, you should still seek help. Share your concerns with an adult you trust right away. You can also call a local emergency number (911) or the toll-free number for a suicide crisis (1-800-273-8255/TALK)

The important thing is to notify a responsible adult. Although it may be tempting to try to help your friend on your own, it's always safest to get help.

\*From Let's Talk...Kentuckians Affected by Suicide ( Kentucky Suicide Prevention Group )

# Immediate Crisis Call – 911

• • • • •

## **Suicide Prevention Lifelines:**

**24 hours a day / 7 days a week.**

**1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

**or**

**(513) 281-2273**

**North Key 24 Hour Hotline/Crisis Response Team:**

**(859) 331-3292**

## **RESOURCES**

(Control + Click to visit links below)

- ❖ Kentucky Suicide Prevention
- ❖ American Association of Suicide Ideology
- ❖ National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
- ❖ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- ❖ US Surgeon General's Reports
- ❖ 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention - A Report of the US Surgeon General
- ❖ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- ❖ Teen Answer
- ❖ The Jason Foundation

### **Quick Links to Regional Suicide Prevention Resources**

Select your area of the Kentucky map below to view various available suicide prevention resources.

**Click here** to view ALL available Kentucky resources.



