

Means Matter

If deadly methods are not readily available a suicidal person may delay or not make an attempt.

- Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and their method can save a life.
- Parents of students at risk should remove firearms from the home temporarily and lock up medications and toxins.
- Parents should communicate with physicians so that medications prescribed to youth are effective but not deadly when treating patients who are potentially suicidal.
- Make sure kids don't have access to keys where medications, toxins or weapons are stored.




Much of the information here is courtesy of SPAN Idaho and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center. Visit their websites for more information on suicide prevention for schools at www.spanidaho.org and www.sprc.org

If you, or someone you know, is in crisis or emotional distress, please call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 1-208-398-HELP (4357).



Youth Suicide: *Helping Your Children*



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Division of Public Health

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Suicide is preventable...

And parents and caregivers can 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 then naturally look to trusted adults for help. Talk to your children. As parents, this is the most important thing we can do. Be persistent if necessary. Be willing to talk about suicide. Talking about suicide or suicidal thoughts **will not** push someone to kill him- or herself. Let them know that suicide is not the answer to whatever they are going through.

Be Aware of Risk Factors

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.

Depression in young people is increasing at an alarming rate and can be difficult to detect in young people. 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 or Sex is a way that some young people cope with feelings of depression or loneliness. However, such behaviors only lead to new problems and a deeper level of depression.

Isolation or Withdrawal can also be a coping strategy for the suicidal youth making them even more susceptible to loneliness, depression and substance abuse.

Other General Risk Factors Include:

- Mental disorders or substance use disorders
- Hopelessness
- History of trauma or abuse
- Family history of suicide
- Easy access to lethal means
- Lack of social support
- Local clusters of suicide that have a contagious influence

Learn to Recognize the Warning Signs

Knowing the warning signals for suicide can save a life. Be aware of the risk factors for youth suicide as well. Most suicidal people give some of the clues and warning signs listed here. By learning the warning signs, paying attention and trusting your own judgment, you can make the difference between life and death.

Warnings Signs

- Talking about, planning or threatening suicide
- Withdrawal or isolation from friends, family or school activities
- Agitation, especially when combined with sleeplessness
- Previous suicide attempts
- Changed eating habits or sleeping patterns
- Giving away prized possessions, making final arrangements, putting affairs in order
- Themes of death or depression in conversation, writing, reading or art
- Recent loss of a friend or family member through death, suicide or divorce
- Sudden dramatic decline or improvement in schoolwork
- Major mood swings or abrupt personality changes
- Feeling hopeless or trapped
- Use or increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Chronic headaches, stomachaches & fatigue
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Taking unnecessary risks or acting reckless
- No longer interested in favorite activities or hobbies

Remember

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