TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCE GUIDE

- Know the risk factors
- Know the warning signs
- How to start a conversation with your child
- What to do if your child says they're considering suicide
- Intervention strategies for caregivers
- Resources for teens
- Resources for caregivers

YES
YOUTH EASTSIDE SERVICES

425.747.4937
www.youtheastsideservices.org
Bellevue | Kirkland | Redmond

KNOW THE RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that someone will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. They can't cause or predict a suicide attempt, but they're important to be aware of.

- Mental disorders, particularly mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, certain personality disorders
- Alcohol and other substance use
- Hopelessness
- Impulsive and/or aggressive tendencies
- History of trauma or abuse
- Major physical illnesses
- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- Loss of relationship(s)
- Easy access to lethal means
- Local clusters of suicide
- Lack of social support
- Stigma associated with asking for help
- Exposure to suicide in real life or through media

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

HOW TO START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR CHILD

- Talk to them in private
- Listen to their story
- Tell them you care about them
- Ask directly if they are thinking about suicide
- Encourage them to seek treatment or to contact their doctor or therapist
- Avoid debating the value of life, minimizing their problems or giving advice

IF YOUR CHILD SAYS THEY ARE CONSIDERING SUICIDE

- Take the person seriously
- Stay with them
- Help them remove lethal means
- Contact any of the resources on the next page
- Escort them to mental health services or an emergency room

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR CAREGIVERS

► **Ask the person, "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"**

It is a myth that you will plant the idea in someone's head. If a person has been thinking of suicide, they will be relieved and grateful that you were willing to be so open and nonjudgmental. It shows the person you truly care and take them seriously. Stay calm, but always take thoughts of or plans for suicide seriously.

► **If you get a "yes" to your question ask, "Do you have a plan?"**

If "yes", you will want to know the plan and if the equipment or drugs are available and accessible.

Ask "Do you have access to your method?" (For example, is there access to a gun, rope, medication, sharp knives, etc.).

Next you should ask "When will you do it?" (Today, next week?)

Asking this question will give you an idea if the person is in immediate danger. If you feel that the threat is imminent, do not leave the person alone! A suicidal person must see a doctor or psychiatrist immediately. You may have to take them to the nearest hospital emergency room or call 9-1-1.

► **Never keep a plan for suicide a secret.**

Don't worry about breaking harming your relationship at this point. Friendships can be fixed. And never call a person's bluff, or try to minimize the problems by telling the person they have everything to live for or how hurt the family would be. This will only increase feelings of guilt and hopelessness. The person needs to be reassured that help is available and that suicidal feelings are temporary. There is medical help to treat depression and other illnesses that cause suicidal feelings.

► **Show you care.**

If you feel the person isn't in immediate danger, you can say things like, "I understand that you are in pain, and that you want the pain to stop", and "I care about you and will do my best to help you." Then follow through. Help find a doctor or a mental health professional. Be by the person's side when that first phone call is made, or go along on the first appointment. It's not a good idea to leave it up to a person to get help on his own. A supportive person can mean so much to someone who's in pain.

If you suspect that someone you care about is considering suicide, help is available to support you in helping to intervene. If you are in Seattle-King County, Washington, please call the **24-Hour Crisis Line: 866-4CRISIS (427-4747)**, local 206-461-3222. They will be able to help you determine if there is an imminent risk of suicide.

Outside of King County, please call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing **9-8-8.**

RESOURCES FOR TEENS

- **Teen Link Help Line** **Call 1(866) TEENLINK (833-6546)**

Teen Link is a confidential, anonymous and non-judgmental telephone help line answered by teens each evening from 6-10 PM. Teen volunteers are trained to listen to your concerns and to talk with you about whatever is on your mind. No issue is too big or too small.

- **Teen Link Chat** **Visit 866TEENLINK.org**

In addition to our telephone help line, Teen Link offers Teen Link Chat, available through their website at www.866TEENLINK.org. Much like the line, teens can use Teen Link Chat to seek support from our teen volunteers on a variety of issues, including: bullying, drug and alcohol concerns, relationships, stress, and other teen issues. Teen Link accepts chats from 6-9:30 PM every day of the week. Teen Link Chat does not work well on cell phones, so we ask that you log on with a computer to chat.

- **Crisis Text Line** **Text HOME to 741741**

Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis (doesn't just mean suicide, it's any painful emotion for which you need support) providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via a medium people already use and trust: text. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from their secure online platform. The goal of any conversation is to get you to a calm, safe place.

- **The Trevor Project** **Call 1-866-488-7386**

The leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25. Text and online chat are also available at www.thetrevorproject.org.

RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

- **Crisis Connections** **Call 866-4CRISIS (427-4747)**

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- **Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** **Call 9-8-8**

A national network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** **Visit afsp.org**

A voluntary health organization that gives those affected by suicide a nationwide community empowered by research, education and advocacy to take action against this leading cause of death.