



EMPOWERING PARENTS TO RAISE
THEIR CHILDREN TO BE SUBSTANCE-FREE

Talk Early And Often About Alcohol, Tobacco And Other Drugs. Even When It Gets Tough

Know! The Threat of Teen Suicide

Should parents be concerned about teen suicide? Absolutely! Teen suicide is currently the third leading cause of death among adolescents. While some youth are at greater risk for suicidal behavior, it is a very real threat to all children.

Teen suicide may be an uncomfortable subject, but in order to prevent it, we must learn more about it and discuss it openly with our children.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 4600 young lives are lost to suicide each year in the U.S., and for every completed suicide, there are 100-200 more attempted suicides. In a nationwide survey of high school youth, 16% of all students said they had seriously considered suicide, 13% reported creating a plan, and 8% reported trying to take their own life in the 12 months preceding the survey.

While there is no checklist to determine which teens will or will not attempt or complete suicide, there are certain factors that place youth at higher risk:

- Those with previous suicide attempts.
- Children with a family history of suicide or exposure to the suicidal behavior of others.
- Young people who suffer with depression or other mental illness.
- Adolescents with alcohol and other drug abuse issues.
- Youth who are disruptive and have difficulty controlling aggressive and impulsive behavior. Children who have problems dealing with stress.
- Those experiencing a stressful life event or loss.
- While girls are more likely to attempt suicide, boys are 4 times more likely to complete suicide.
- Gay and lesbian youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to complete suicide than other youth.
- And those associated with bullying - as the victim, the perpetrator or even as a witness are at greater risk for self-harm.

The CDC reports that the top three methods used in suicides among youth include firearms (45%), suffocation (40%), and poisoning (8%). Therefore, access to guns, prescription medications, or any other lethal means, also increases risk for death.

Now that you know the staggering statistics surrounding the issue, let's discuss the warning signs to look out for and ways you can proactively take part in prevention. We will discuss all this and more in the following Know! Tip.

If you, your child or someone else you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK, or go online at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Suicide Prevention – Youth Suicide. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention: Suicide – Facts at a Glance, 2012. Teen Suicide: Teen Suicide Prevention Main Source Material: "Teen Suicide." Ohio State University Medical Center. Ohio State University.

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

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