

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS, STATISTICS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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WARNING SIGNS

1. An attempted suicide and especially a failed suicide are both to be taken extremely seriously. Research indicates that a person who makes one attempt on his life is ten times more likely than the average person to end up taking his life.
2. The "too perfect" individual or workaholic may be a greater risk of suicide. Males who have risen steadily in their field but fail to reach an important goal seem to be at greater risk.
3. Research indicates a recent loss may precede suicide, both in the lives of males and females: the death of a friend or loved one, the break-up of a relationship. The loss of a job or failure to win an award is also a danger sign.
4. A suicide threat or other statement indicating a desire to die. Seventy-five percent of suicide victims have mentioned it beforehand.
5. The making of final arrangements including giving away prized possessions.
6. Changes in personality or behavior such as:
 - a. A drop in performance of a normally conscientious hard-working individual.
 - b. Withdrawal.
 - c. Mental depression.
 - d. Changes in appetite or sleep patterns.
 - e. Mood swings, including depressive behavior and passive behavior, but also aggressive or hostile behavior, and sometimes unexplained euphoria.
 - f. Reckless behavior such as taking life threatening risks.
7. Sudden or continued involvement with drugs or alcohol can be another sign of an effort to compensate for a severe state of discouragement. Some studies show over 50% of suicides 30 years of age and under were involved in substance abuse.
8. Family history of suicide.
9. Family history of child maltreatment.
10. Cultural or religious beliefs supportive of suicide.
11. Local epidemic of suicide.
12. Isolation.
13. Physical illness.
14. Easy access to lethal methods.
15. Teen is upset after being on line or after receiving text messages.

Additional Resource: Center for Disease Control. CDCinfo@cdc.gov *

* WHAT TO DO

1. Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
2. Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
3. Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
4. Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.

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5. Don't dare him or her to do it.
6. Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
7. Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
8. Offer hope that alternatives are available but do not offer glib reassurance.
9. Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
10. Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.
11. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK, provides access to trained telephone counselors, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
12. Parents discuss respectful *use* of computer and have guidelines for use of computers and viewing sites.

- American Association of Suicideology, info@suicideology.org

***STATISTICS IN 2005**

- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15-24-year olds and accounts for 12.9% of deaths in this age range.
- There was 1 suicide for every 100-200 attempts by young persons 15-24 years of age.
- 16.9% of students grade 9-12 seriously considered suicide in the previous 12 months. (21.8% of females and 12.0% of males.)
- 8.4% of students reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months. (10.8% of females and 6% of males.)
- 2.9% of females and 1.8% of males reported making at least one suicide attempt in the previous 12 months that required medical attention.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical, and substance abuse disorders.
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help seeking.
- Family and community support.
- Support from ongoing medical and mental health care relationships.
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, and nonviolent way of idling disputes.
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support instincts for self-preservation.

*Suicide Facts at a Glance, Summer, 2007. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, cdcinfo@scic.90v.