

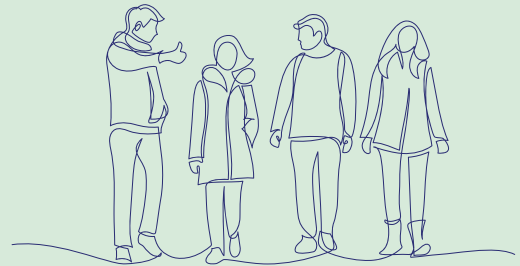
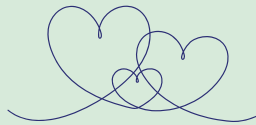
Parent guide for suicide awareness



Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in adolescence. At times parents can find it challenging to distinguish between normal adolescent behavior and when there is a cause for concern. Below is a brief guide that distinguishes typical adolescent behavior from behaviors that would indicate that a young person is at risk for suicide:

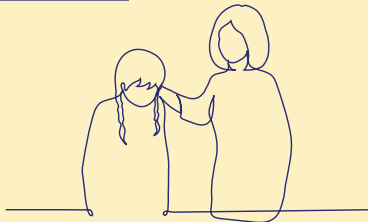
Developmentally appropriate adolescent behaviors:

- Moodiness and emotional fluctuations
- Seeking privacy and independence
- Pushing boundaries
- Increased focus on peer relationships
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Concerns about appearance
- Experimentation (different styles, activities, friend groups, exploring identity)
- Romantic interests



Signs an adolescent may be suicidal:

- Isolation from friends and family
- Problems eating or sleeping
- Mood swings
- Reckless behavior
- Dropping grades
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Giving away belongings
- Talking about feeling hopeless or trapped
- Talking about being a burden to others or not belonging
- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Writing or drawing about suicide or acting it out in play
- Neglecting hygiene
- Difficulty coping with everyday stressors



Parents should be aware that certain **risk factors** may increase a young person's risk for suicide. Some risk factors include:

- Mental and behavioral health conditions
- Previous suicide attempt
- Family history of depression or suicide
- Academic stress, disciplinary problems and/or bullying at school
- Family factors such as violence at home
- Physical or sexual abuse
- LGBTQ youth that have unsupportive home and/or school environments

Things you can do to help your child:

If you believe your child is in immediate danger to themselves or others, call 911.

If you have concerns about your child but are unsure what to do or say, you can call or text 988 or text HOME to 741741 to speak with a mental health professional.

Ask your child if they are having thoughts about suicide. Asking this question directly is important.

Be there. Listening to your child without judgment is key to learning about what he or she is thinking and feeling.

Help keep them safe. Asking your child if they have a plan to kill themselves and making lethal means less available or less deadly can help your child stay safe when suicidal thoughts arise.



Help them connect. Connect your child with 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (call or text 988) and other community resources (24/7 Kids & Teens Helpline: 904.202.7900 or Text LIFE to 741741) to give them a safety net when they need it. You can also help them reach out to other trusted family members, friends, spiritual advisors or mental health professionals.

Follow up. Continuing to check in with your child after they have experienced a crisis or have been discharged from care can make a difference. Studies show that supportive, ongoing contact can play an important role in suicide prevention.