

## *Warning Signs of Suicide*

Adolescents often show signs of trouble or suicide. Never ignore these signs. Suicide can be prevented with proper intervention.

### **Warning signs may include:**

- Suicide notes and/or talking about suicide
- Acting out, acts of aggression, and/or violent behavior
- Depression or severe mood changes
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Efforts to hurt oneself such as cutting, marking/scratching the body, dangerous acts, risky behavior
- Inability to concentrate or think rationally
- Changes in physical habits and appearance
- Sudden or dramatic changes in personality, friends, behaviors
- Death and/or suicidal themes in drawings, journals, writings
- Increased focus on guns, weapons, and/or drugs and medication
- Fascination with death and dying
- Giving away prized possessions or making out a will
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Poor self esteem or guilt
- Not wanting to participate in family or social activities
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Feeling of anger, rage, or need for revenge
- Feeling exhausted most of the time
- Trouble with concentration
- Regular and frequent crying
- Frequent physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches
- Reckless, impulsive behaviors

### **Possible triggers:**

- Getting into trouble with authorities
- Break-up with a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Death of a significant loved one
- Knowing someone who died by suicide
- Bullying/ harassment
- Family conflict or dysfunction
- Academic troubles or failure
- Disappointment or rejection
- Abuse
- Exposure to trauma
- Serious illness or injury
- Anniversary of the death of a loved one
- Forced or extended separation from friends or family

### **Tips for Parents:**

- Know the warning signs
- Do not be afraid to talk with your child – Evidence indicates that with your child lowers the risk of suicide. The message is, “Suicide is not an option; help is available.”
- Suicide-proof your home – Make sure knives, pills, and firearms are inaccessible.
- Utilize school and community resources – Contact the school guidance office for a list of school and community resources
- Take immediate action if your child shows warning signs of suicide
- Listen to your child and/or your child’s friends
- Do not prejudge

### **Tips for Teachers:**

- Know the warning signs
- Know the school’s responsibilities
- Let students know that you or someone else in the school is there to help them and that school personnel care
- Refer students immediately to counselor, principal, or designee when they show any suicide warning signs
- Join the crisis, SAP, or at-risk team
- Advocate for students at-risk

### **Resources:**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Texting “START” to 741741  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

American Association of Suicidology – 1-303-692-0285  
[www.suicidology.org](http://www.suicidology.org)

National Association of School Psychologists – 1 301-657-0270  
[www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

Suicide Awareness/ Voice of Education (SAVE)  
[www.save.org](http://www.save.org)

For more information, please contact your child’s school guidance office.