

National Suicide Prevention Week

National Suicide Prevention Week is this week, September 9-15. I'd like to try to help you with this difficult subject in order to *prevent* another child from taking their own life. Unfortunately, too many of us can say that we know someone who has made that choice. I remember as a high school teacher, a student of mine decided to take his life. I was crushed, surprised, and confused by his death. I don't want to ever feel that again. I want to help you, as a parent, to know how to deal with this difficult topic with your child so you never have to feel that pain.

It's one of those conversations that as a parent, we really don't want to have, but it is a conversation that we **MUST** have! "It's the 2nd leading cause of death for youth age 10-24. Even more disturbing are national surveys that tell us that 17.7% of high school students admit to thinking about suicide and almost 9% acknowledge actually making an attempt. The unfortunate truth is that suicide can happen to **ANY** kid in **ANY** family at **ANY** time. You talk to your children about other behaviors which can put them at personal risk, and suicide is no different. It's something you **CAN** and **SHOULD** talk about with your children," according to Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide.

It's often believed that if you talk to your teen/child about suicide, you will plant the idea in his/her head. This is **NOT** the case! What's important is that you are opening up the conversation to let your teen know that it's okay for them to talk to you when they're feeling down. It's normal to feel sad, but you need to let your teen/child know that suicide is not an option when they are feeling down. It could be a temporary feeling and suicide is a permanent fix. If it is more than a temporary feeling, they need to know there are other options to help, and you are available to talk and get them the help needed. Suicide IS NOT the answer.

The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide gives these guidelines for opening up the conversation to your teen about suicide. PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ:

http://www.sptsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Talking_to_your_Kids_About_Suicide.pdf

Communication is key, and you hold that key!

See below for more information (pages 2 & 3)

Know the Warning Signs

Suicide Warning Signs



TALK

Experiencing unbearable pain
Being a burden to others
Killing themselves
Feeling trapped
Having no reason to live



MOOD

Depression
Loss of interest
Irritability
Anxiety
Humiliation
Rage



BEHAVIOR

Increased use of alcohol or drugs
Withdrawing from activities
Giving away prized possessions
Isolating from friends & family
Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online for materials or means
Sleeping too little or too much
Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
Acting recklessly
Aggression

afsp.org/signs



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**

Additional Resources:

National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)

10 Things Parents Can Do to Prevent Suicide

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Ten-Things-Parents-Can-Do-to-Prevent-Suicide.aspx>

Suicide Prevention, Children Ages 10 to 19 Years

https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/children/fact_sheets/10-19_years/suicide_prevention_10-19_years.htm

How can we help prevent suicides? Ask and listen doctors say

<https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/how-can-we-help-prevent-suicides-ask-listen-doctors-say-n881336>

Kids at Risk: Nightly New with Lester Holt (video)

<https://www.facebook.com/nbcnightlynews/videos/kids-at-risk/10156160024078689/>