



## GENERAL INFORMATION

National Children's  
MENTAL HEALTH **AWARENESS WEEK** 2019

# Preventing Suicide: **EVERYONE** *Has A Role To Play* Ask, Listen, Get Help

Rates of death by suicide have increased over the past 10 years. The 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that almost **1 in 5 middle school students** report seriously thinking of killing themselves and **1 in 10 teens have made a suicide plan** in the last 12 months.

While these statistics can be startling, there are resources to help people struggling. The most important thing is to be open to talking about suicide and being courageous enough to ask for help. Children and youth learn from the examples set by adults in their lives. They are trying to make sense of the world and need trusted adults who will talk openly and honestly about mental health struggles, death, and suicide.

### Connection and honest conversation are the keys to suicide prevention.

- ◆ **Get to know the young people in your life** — point out their strengths, support them in mastering a skill, help them feel like they belong and are an important part of the community
- ◆ **If you are worried about them, ask directly** — “You matter to me and I am worried. Are you thinking of killing yourself?” — talking about suicide does NOT make a person more likely to attempt suicide. In fact, honest direct discussion brings suicide thoughts into the open and provides the opportunity for the person to get the help they need.
- ◆ **Listen without judgment, validate their feelings and experience** — to maintain trust and open communication it is important to validate the person's feelings. Remember, young people are experiencing life's challenges for the first time, their brains are still developing, and they feel things intensely.
- ◆ **Connect them with resources** — Do not leave someone alone if they are thinking of killing themselves. Call your local crisis line to get connected to a mental health professional.

**Where to Get Help:**  
**vtspc.org or UmatterUcanGetHelp.com**



**CRISIS TEXT LINE**

Text VT to 741741  
Free 24/7, Confidential

THE **TREVOR** PROJECT  
**LGBTQ CRISIS HOTLINE**  
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