

## **Some things you need to know about young people**

**Myth:** If a suicidal youth tells a friend, the friend will tell an adult.

**Fact:** Most suicidal young people do not tell an adult.

### **Good Friends Don't Keep Deadly Secrets**

#### **Warning signs to look for in young people:**

- Change in interaction with family and friends
- Recent disappointment or rejection
- Sudden decline or improvement in academic performance
- Physical symptoms: eating disturbances, changes in sleep patterns, chronic headaches, stomach problems, menstrual irregularities
- Increased apathy
- Being expelled from school /fired from job
- Family problems/alienation
- Feeling embarrassed or humiliated in front of peers
- Victim of assault or bullying

#### **Some things you need to know about suicidal young people:**

1. Many young people are reluctant to seek or accept help for any problem, including suicide. This seems to be especially true for males. Part of this may be due to the fact that males often feel less comfortable than females in talking about their problems or feelings. Therefore, if you are at all suspicious that a teenaged boy or young man may be suicidal, be bold and persistent in your efforts to be helpful.
2. In general, boys and young men are less likely to recognize their own symptoms of depression or to seek treatment when they feel bad. Instead, they often drink heavily or use drugs to try to feel better. Boys also tend to use firearms or other highly lethal means to kill themselves.
3. While girls and young women are almost twice as likely to suffer from depression, their depressive illness may be less impulsive and violent than depression in boys. Perhaps as a result, boys complete suicide much more frequently than girls.
4. Lastly, adolescent boys and young men are more likely than girls to have experienced a crisis sometime in the 24 hours prior to a suicide attempt (especially in relation to break-ups with girlfriends, disciplinary problems, legal crises or humiliating events).

## **What you need to know about substance abuse and suicide.**

- ***Suicidal people often drink alcohol or use other drugs before they make a suicide attempt. Youth who use alcohol or other illicit drugs are at especially high risk for suicidal behaviors.***

Even people who otherwise do not use or abuse alcohol may suddenly begin to drink as they approach the decision to die. Heavy and/or unusual drinking can be a warning sign for suicide, and mixing alcohol with over-the-counter or prescription medications is a deadly combination.

- ***Alcohol and depression do not mix!***

According to several expert sources, the people most at risk for dying by suicide are suffering from depression or some other disorder of mood, *and* are abusing alcohol or other drugs.

- ***Suicide risk, and the risk for violence, is highest when the person...***
  - has a firearm
  - is upset
  - and has been drinking

**Once you have determined that a person is considering suicide with QPR, you can quickly reduce the risk of a suicide attempt by taking the following steps...**

- Do not supply alcohol or other drugs to the suicidal person; a drink or two may make things worse, not better!
- If the person has been drinking, do everything you can to sober him or her up as quickly as possible!
- Make sure any firearm or other means of suicide has been removed and safely stored away from the suicidal person.

**Note:** If you do not feel confident in intervening with someone who is intoxicated, talking about suicide and has a firearm or other means of suicide, call 911 immediately.

Finally, if the suicidal person you know is abusing alcohol or other drugs on a frequent or long term basis, please get them to a qualified treatment professional for evaluation and possible treatment. Most people who have substance problems are not getting treatment... treatment that could save their lives from suicide.

### **Sources:**

- Dr. George Murphy, *Suicide in Alcoholism*, 1992, New York: Oxford University Press
- National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 2000, and from the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, U.S. Government, 2002
- National Institute of Mental Health, 2002

## Building Protective Factors with Your Child

### Make it a priority to interact with your child in a positive way

- ✓ Make sure your child is told that your number one concern in life is their emotional and physical wellbeing. If this is at risk for any reason, they can tell you. You will not be angry~ They will not be punished.
- ✓ Limit access to lethal means. Lock up all meds, guns; keep car keys in safe place at night
- ✓ Build on the following in order to create a relaxed and non-conflict oriented home
  - Priorities: Ask how this day was before you ask why the trash cans haven't been brought in
  - Empathy: I know this must be difficult for you. "Sorry you're having such a tough time
  - Expression of affection: Verbalize love often, cards, texts, little gifts, and letters
  - Engagement: Plop yourself in their world and share the experiences. Learn about things that matter to them
  - Non-problem based communication
  - Opportunities to repair trust on both sides
  - Praise and credit
  - Discipline without hostility
  - Family activity
  - Problem solving communication
  - Listen to and encourage "I am going to do this" talk
  - If your child is struggling:
    - *Don't be afraid to ask about feelings of suicide*

Teens have moments of powerful emotions and overwhelming emotions and short histories of effectively dealing with them

### Teen thoughts easily get locked in and distorted:

- I have always felt like this
- No one cares about me
- I can't do anything right
- I am a burden
- It won't get better

### To counter this:

- ✓ Encourage child to journal on good days. Have them review this when they have a bad moment
- ✓ If they won't journal their good days, you keep your own of their good days and share with them
- ✓ Encourage them to collage what they love to do, what they look forward to, what they want to do, experiences, accomplishments, who are important to them
- ✓ Write letters that focus on positive things about who they are as a person
- ✓ Point out previous periods when they felt bad and how they moved through it
- ✓ Teach ways to self soothe and make selves feel better
- ✓ Make list of everyone who loves them
- ✓ Remember, we don't have to take pain away, just reduce it to manageable level
- ✓ Don't hesitate to find help

## CRISIS RESOURCES



### For Immediate Assistance

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
Text CSIS to 839863  
[www.Suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.Suicidepreventionlifeline.org)
- Community Health Network Text Line: Text HELP NOW to 20121
- Community Health Network Crisis Line: 1-800-662-3445 or 317-621-5700
- Call 911 ask for a CIT officer

### Community Resources

#### Mental Health Centers:

Midtown Mental Health Center:	Access and 24/7 Crisis Line: 317-880-8485
Community Health Network:	Access and 24/7 Crisis Line: 317-621-5700
Aspire Indiana	24/7 Crisis Line: 1-800-560-4038 Appointments: 1-877-574-1254
Adult and Child Mental Health Center	317-882-5122
Children's Bureau, Inc.	317-924-6203
Cummins Behavioral Health System	317-247-8900
Charities Indianapolis	317-236-1500

#### Other Services:

Substance Abuse Counseling:	Fairbanks Hospital: 317-572-9396
Alcoholics Anonymous	317-632-7864
Domestic Violence Hotline:	317-926-4357
Rape/Sexual Assault Center	1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
Crisis Services:	Mental Health America Indy: 317-251-7575
Child Abuse Hotline	CPS: 1-800-800-556
Police	IMPD: 317-327-3271 Non-Emergency Number: 317-327-3811
American Society For Suicide Prevention	<a href="http://www.afsp.org">www.afsp.org</a>
Suicide Prevention Resource Center	<a href="http://www.sprc.org">www.sprc.org</a>
The Jason Foundation: Youth Prevention	<a href="http://jasonfoundation.org">jasonfoundation.org</a> (see apps)
Connect to Help	Call 211 or <a href="http://Connect2help211.org">Connect2help211.org</a>