



# TIPS FOR PARENTS:

## PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE

### What are the factors that contribute to youth suicide?

Youth suicide is a complex issue. A combination of personal, family, and community factors contribute to the risk of suicide. Risk factors are characteristics that make it more likely that individuals will consider, attempt, or die by suicide. They include:<sup>1</sup>

- Family history of suicide
- Family history of child abuse
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- History of mental disorders, particularly clinical depression
- History of alcohol and substance abuse
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Cultural and religious beliefs (e.g., belief that suicide is noble resolution of a personal dilemma)
- Local clusters of suicide
- Isolation, a feeling of being cut off from other people
- Barriers to accessing mental health treatment
- Loss (relationships, work, or financial)
- Physical illness
- Easy access to lethal methods (e.g. firearms)
- Unwillingness to seek help because of the stigma attached to mental health and substance abuse disorders or to suicidal thoughts

### What are the warning signs of youth suicide?

If you are concerned about your child, ask yourself the following questions. Has your son or daughter shown or shared any of the following<sup>2</sup>:

- 1** Talk about wanting to die, be dead, or about suicide, or are they cutting or burning themselves?
- 2** Feeling like things may never get better, seeming like they are in terrible emotional pain (like something is wrong deep inside but they can't make it go away), or they are struggling to deal with a big loss in their life?
- 3** Or is your gut telling you to be worried because they have withdrawn from everyone and everything, have become more anxious or on edge, seem unusually angry, or just don't seem normal to you?



## How can you respond?

If you notice any of these warning signs in anyone, you can help!<sup>2</sup>

- Ask if they are ok or if they are having thoughts of suicide
- Express your concern about what you are observing in their behavior
- Listen closely and do not judge
- Reflect what they share and let them know they have been heard
- Tell them they are not alone
- Let them know there are resources available that can help
- If you or they are concerned, guide them to additional professional help

## Are you still concerned?

Here is how you can get help:

### Life Threatening Emergencies

- For someone with an immediate life threatening emergency, dial **9-1-1** for assistance.

### Crisis Services

- **Colorado Crisis Services Hotline:** Get connected to a crisis counselor or trained professional 24/7 who will assess risk and determine if a mobile response is necessary.  
Call 1-844-493-8255, or text "TALK" to 38255
- **Crisis Stabilization Units:** There is a walk-in stabilization unit in Colorado Springs where individuals may receive immediate help at no charge. Available 24/7/365.  
115 S. Parkside Dr, Colorado Springs, CO 80909

### Non-Crisis Options

- For non-crisis options and other mental health resources, visit [www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org)

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Suicide: Risk and Protective Factors: [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/riskprotectivefactors.html)

<sup>2</sup>Youth Suicide Warning Signs: [www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/healthcare-professionals](http://www.youthsuicidewarningsigns.org/healthcare-professionals)

