

# Suicidal Ideation

## Behavioral Health Tips

Suicidal ideation is the process of thinking about ending one's life. In Emergency Psychiatry, one of the treatment team's most common consults is to evaluate suicidal ideation in a patient. Suicidal ideation can come in many forms. Some individuals think about suicide but have no intention of attempting to end their lives while others have specific ideas how and when they expect to attempt suicide. The role of the treatment team in the Emergency Department is to discuss these thoughts with both the patient and family members, gather as much information as possible about the patient's history and possible risk factors, and then decide whether the patient is safe to leave the Emergency Room or should stay in the hospital to get care and to ensure safety. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for pre-adolescents and adolescents and Pediatric Emergency Psychiatry providers use their full range of investigative interviewing and past experiences to keep children in the least restrictive, safe environment possible.

### Warning Signs:

The number one risk factor for someone to attempt suicide is past attempt(s) of suicide. If a child has previously attempted suicide, parents should be vigilant and make sure previously identified ways to commit suicide by the child are proofed, i.e. locking up medications or sharp objects. Other risk factors are when children talk about wanting to die and identify ways in passive that they could end their lives. Parents should be on the lookout if children start referring to themselves as burdens. Drug and alcohol use increases the risk for suicidal ideation; many children use drugs and alcohol in attempts to hide or treat negative and depressive thoughts. Other risks factors are sudden withdrawal or increased isolation from peers and family, increased reckless behavior, decreased sleep or extreme mood swings.

### How Parents Can Help:

Parents should be proactive in keeping lines of communication open with their children. Most children display warning signs before considering or attempting suicide and effective diagnosis and treatment of underlying mood, anxiety and substance use problems can ensure children get the care they need. Parents should also be honest with themselves and reactive to warning signs. There is no shame in bringing a child to the nearest Emergency Room or calling 911 if there are concerns. If parents learn that patients are self-

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### Cohen Children's Medical Center

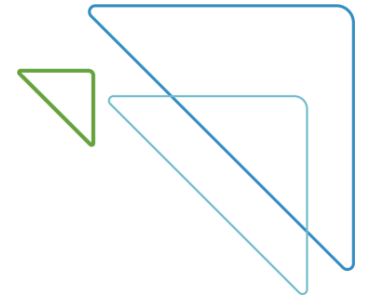
Pediatric Behavioral Health- Rockville Centre  
100 Merrick Road  
Rockville Centre, NY 11570

**516-927-1630**

Pediatric Behavioral Health- Mineola  
156 First Street  
Mineola, NY 11501

**516-321-5770**

# Pediatric Behavioral Health



harming or have acted in any way that could jeopardize their life, they should get help as quickly as possible.

## Treatments:

The key to keeping kids safe is getting them evaluated by trained mental health providers. Outpatient providers can often see patients urgently and the Emergency Room and 911 should be activated if any acute safety concerns are present. Often patients with acute safety risks are admitted to the hospital where they are able to be started on medications or have their medications adjusted. They are also given therapy and strong follow-up care is set-up to ensure the child stays safe after leaving the hospital.

## Hotlines:

**National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)**

Both toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotlines which connect you to a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center.

## The Trevor Project: 866-4-U-TREVOR

A crisis and suicide prevention helpline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.

Visit [www.TheTrevorProject.org](http://www.TheTrevorProject.org) for more information.

## Safe Place: 1-888-290-7233

Project Safe Place provides access to immediate help and supportive resources for young people in crisis.

## National Alliance of the Mentally Ill: 1-800-950-6264

Toll-free, confidential hotline operating Mon.-Fri., 10 am- 6 pm (EST). Trained volunteers provide information, referrals, and support to anyone with questions about mental illness.

## Additional Resources:

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education

<https://save.org/>

The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ Youth)

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Your Life Your Voice:

<http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org/Pages/home.aspx>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center:

<http://www.sprc.org/>

Society For the Prevention of Teen Suicide:

<https://www.sptsusa.org/>

American Association of Suicidology:

<https://www.suicidology.org/>

## Recommended Readings:

*Depression: A Teen's Guide to Survive and Thrive*

Author: Jacqueline Toner

*When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens*

Author: Beverly Cobain

*Positive*

Authors: Paige Rawl and Ali Benjamin

*Unworthy: How to Stop Hating Yourself*

Author: Anneli Rufus

*The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: CBT Skills to Help You Deal with Worry and Anxiety*

Authors: Michael Tompkins and Jonathan Barkin

*Coping with Depression in Young People: A Guide for Parents*

Authors: Carol Fitzpatrick and John Sharry

*Life, in Spite of Me: Extraordinary Hope After a Fatal Choice*

Author: Kristen Anderson

*So Much I Want to Tell You: Letters to my Little Sister*

Author: Anna Akana