

Suicide Intervention & Prevention

Parent Information Flyer

SUICIDE STATISTICS

- ✧ Suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15 to 19 year olds.
- ✧ Almost as many teens die by suicide as those who die from all natural causes combined.
- ✧ From 1999 to 2004, a total of 13,257 suicide attempts made in the state of Texas resulted in death. 2,100 of these deaths were children and young adults from 10 to 24 years of age.
- ✧ For Texas high school students within a 12-month period:
 - o 16% think seriously about suicide
 - o 9% attempt suicide
 - o 3% make a suicide attempt that requires medical attention

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Ideation (thinking, talking or wishing about suicide)
- Substance use or abuse (increased use or change in substance)
- Purposelessness (no sense of purpose or belonging)
- Anger
- Trapped (feeling like there is no way out)
- Hopelessness (there is nothing to live for, no hope or optimism)
- Withdrawal (from family, friends, work, school, activities, hobbies)
- Anxiety (restlessness, irritability, agitation)
- Recklessness (high risk-taking behavior)
- Mood disturbance (dramatic changes in mood)

What to Do

- ✧ Remain calm.
- ✧ Ask the youth directly if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- ✧ Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory.
- ✧ Listen.
- ✧ Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- ✧ Do not judge.
- ✧ Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- ✧ Remove means for self-harm.

Most Importantly...Get Help

- ✧ Peers should not agree to keep the suicidal thoughts a secret and instead should tell an adult, such as a parent, counselor, teacher, or school psychologist.
- ✧ Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible.
- ✧ School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.

NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Risk Factors

Certain characteristics are associated with increased suicide risk. These include:

- Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse.
- Family stress/dysfunction.
- Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home.
- Situational crises (i.e., death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, etc.).

The School's Role

The entire school staff should work to create an environment where students feel safe sharing personal information related to suicidal thoughts and depression. School counselors, school psychologists and other crisis team personnel. These individuals are trained to intervene when a student is identified at risk for suicide. They will conduct an informal risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and referrals to community services, and require that parents come to the campus and pick the student up immediately.

Parental Notification & Participation

Parent notification is a vital part of suicide prevention. Parents need to be informed and actively involved in decisions regarding their child's welfare. Even if a child is judged to be at low risk for suicidal behavior, schools will ask parents to sign a Notification of Emergency Status form to indicate that relevant information has been provided. These notifications must be documented. As noted above, parents will also be asked to come and pick up their child immediately.

Additionally, parents are crucial members of a suicide risk assessment as they often have information critical to making an appropriate assessment of risk, including mental health history, family dynamics, recent traumatic events, and previous suicidal behaviors.

After a school notifies a parent of their child's risk for suicide and provides referral information, the responsibility falls upon the parent to seek mental health assistance for their child. Parents must:

- Continue to take threats seriously: Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent "they didn't mean it." **Avoid assuming behavior is attention seeking.**
- Maintain communication with the school. After such an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place for your child.

Resiliency Factors

Once a child is considered at risk, schools, families and friends should work together to build resiliency factors and reduce risk factors in and around the youth.

- Family support and cohesion, including good communication.
- Peer support and close social networks.
- School and community connectedness.
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote healthy living.
- Adaptive coping and problem-solving skills, including conflict-resolution.
- General life satisfaction, good self-esteem, sense of purpose.
- Easy access to effective medical and mental health resources.

LISD Guidance & Counseling Services
<http://bit.ly/LISDGuidance>

Information adapted from:

- ✂ www.nasponline.org
- ✂ www.samsha.org
- ✂ www.sptusa.org

Personal Wellness. Empowered Students. Promising Futures.

LISD Guidance and Counseling Vision