



Youth Suicide Prevention: Make a Difference

Managing Stress

Everyone experiences stress at some time or another. It might be caused by problems at school or work, relationships with friends, siblings or parents, moving to a new place, or a traumatic event.

Stress can affect people in different ways:

- sad, angry, or anxious
- lack of confidence
- avoiding other people
- upset stomach
- headache
- problems eating or sleeping

You probably can't get rid of stress, so how do you manage it?

- Express yourself – draw, write, play music
- Exercise – walk, run, shoot baskets
- Avoid harmful behaviors like drugs, cigarettes and alcohol
- Talk to someone – ask a friend to listen or call a hotline

Understanding Depression & Self Harm

Depression is a mental disorder that is more severe and longer-lasting than normal sadness. It interferes with parts of your life like work, school and relationships. The symptoms are not always the same in every person, but can include:

- sadness that won't go away
- boredom
- irritability or anxiety
- change in appetite or sleeping habits

Depression can be treated. The treatment may or may not involve medication, but it important to get professional help.

Self-harm is often a behavior that is used to cope with difficult situations. It might:

- provide a way to express difficult or hidden feelings
- express the need for help when you're unable to ask for it
- provide a feeling of control.

Self-harm may bring an immediate sense of relief, but it is not a long-term solution, and it can cause permanent damage to the body by injuring the nerves.

Link Between Bullying and Suicide

Research has shown that being a victim, perpetrator, or even a witness to bullying is associated with multiple behavioral, emotional, and social problems, including an increased risk for suicidal ideation.



According to the 2008 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey:

- Nearly 1/4 of 10th graders who reported being bullied also reported having made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months
- Half of the 12th graders who reported being bullied also reported feeling sad and hopeless almost every day for two weeks in a row

There are many people who can help deal with a bully, such as friends, older siblings, teachers, family members, counselors or parents. It is always easier if you talk to someone you know and trust. Ask a friend to go with you to help you feel more comfortable or write down what is going on and how you are feeling.

If you think the person you are talking to doesn't believe you or isn't taking you seriously, it is important to remember that this doesn't mean your feelings aren't valid or that you are overreacting. It is important that you tell someone else and continue to do so until you get the help you deserve.

Helping a Friend

If a friend mentions suicide, take it seriously. If he or she has expressed an immediate plan, or has access to a gun or other potentially deadly means, do not leave him or her alone. Get help immediately.

Three Life-saving Steps:

Show you care

Let your friend know that you really care. Ask about his or her feelings. Listen carefully to what he or she has to say. Here are some examples of how to begin the conversation:

- *"I'm worried about you/about how you feel."*
- *"You mean a lot to me and I want to help."*
- *"I'm here if you need someone to talk to."*

Ask the question: Are you thinking about suicide?

Talking with a friend about suicide will not put the idea into his or her head. Be direct in a caring, non-confrontational way. Here are some ways to ask the question:

- *"Have you ever thought about suicide?"*
- *"Do you want to die or do you just want your problems to go away?"*

Get Help

If a friend tells you he or she is thinking of suicide, never keep it a secret, even if you're asked to. Do not try to handle the situation on your own. You can be the most help by referring your friend to someone with the professional skills necessary to provide the help that he or she needs. You can continue to help by offering support. Here are some ways to talk to your friend about getting help:

- *"I know where we can get some help."*
- *"Let's talk to someone who can help. Let's call the crisis line now."*
- *"I can go with you to get some help"*



Talking with an Adult

Friends can help but sometimes what you are going through is too big to handle by yourself and you need an adult to get involved. But who do you ask for help?

- Choose an adult you trust - maybe it is a family member or a neighbor, a favorite teacher, the school nurse. It might be your doctor, your pastor, or the school counselor, or your coach.
- Or call a hotline – 1 800 273-TALK

What do I say to start the conversation? Aren't they going to think I am crazy and need to be in a hospital?

- Try asking them first if they have time to talk
- Tell them that you want them to listen and not be quick to give advice or judge
- Tell them that you are having a hard time, that you can't see any way out of your problems, and that you have thought about ending your life

Coping after a Suicide

- If someone you care about has died by suicide, you may be feeling a whole range of different emotions - shock, disbelief, anger, guilt, grief. *You might be asking yourself:*
- "Why did they do it?"
- "What could I have done to help?"

It is normal to try to make sense of something that seems senseless, but it is important to understand that you are not at fault. After a suicide, sometimes people feel such intense emotional pain that they wonder if they can survive. If you feel this way, it is important to talk about your feelings with someone you trust. Or you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24 hours a day at 1-800-273-TALK to speak with a someone who will listen to you and understand what you are going through.

You may find it hard to believe now, but your grief will not always feel like this. Grief changes as you work through it, and eventually it will get easier to deal with your loss. Until then, talking to people you love and trust about how you feel can help you deal with your pain.

Resources:

- Youth Suicide Prevention Program Resources: www.yspp.org/resources/GLBTQResources.htm
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) | TTY: 1-800-799-4889 | www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- 1-866-TEENLINK | 866-833-6546 | www.866teenlink.org
- Washington Recovery Help Line (24 hours): Support and resources for youth struggling with substance abuse, problem gambling, and/or mental health. Confidential and anonymous. Toll Free 1-866-789-1511 | www.warecoveryhelpline.org
- Greater Seattle Alateen & Alanon: Support groups for youth struggling with addiction. Meetings available in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap Counties. Visit their website for more information and a list of meetings in your area. Call 24-Hour Hotline (206) 625-0000 | www.seattle-al-anon.org
- LGBTQAI+ Youth: Call 24-Hour Hotline 1-866-488-7386 | www.thetrevorproject.org
- 1-855-DRUGFREE | www.drugfree.com