

## WHAT IS SUICIDE AND WHO IS IMPACTED?

- Suicide is a serious public health problem that causes significant pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families and communities. Sadly, suicide is one of the leading causes of death in children and adolescents.
- People often think about ending their lives when they are depressed or feel hopeless.
  - However, there can be other reasons that trigger suicidal thoughts and actions, such as break up with a partner, failing in school, being bullied, or experiencing abuse, loss, or other trauma.
- In 2016, suicide was the second leading cause of death for people ages 10 to 34.

## WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIOR

- **Talking about...**
  - wanting to die or kill oneself
  - feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
  - being a burden to others
- **Suicide notes.** These are a very real sign of danger and should ALWAYS be taken seriously. These notes may be in the form of letters, emails, social media posts, or text messages.
- **Previous attempts.** If someone has attempted suicide in the past, they are more likely to try again.
- **Final arrangements.** This behavior may take many forms. In teens, it might be saying goodbye to friends, giving away prized possessions, or deleting profiles, pictures or posts on social media.
- **Dramatic changes.** Changes can include withdrawing from friends and family, skipping school or classes, becoming less involved in activities that were once important, avoiding others, inability to sleep or sleeping all the time, sudden weight gain or loss, and/or disinterest in appearance or hygiene.
- **Plan/method/access.** A suicidal child or adolescent may show an increased interest in guns and other weapons, may seem to have increased access to guns or pills, and/or may talk about or hint at a suicide plan.



## BEHAVIORS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- **Risky Behaviors.** Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs, showing rage or talking about seeking revenge. (Mental Health.gov)
- **Hurting oneself.** Self-injurious behaviors (e.g., cutting) are warning signs for young children as well as teenagers.

### RESOURCES

Mental Health.gov: <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015, 2017: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

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## TIPS FOR PARENTS

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- **Know the warning signs.** Read over the list on the front page and keep it in a safe place.
- **Ask your child** if they are having thoughts about killing themselves. (This will not put the idea into their head or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.)
- **Listen without judging** and let them know you care about them.
- **Help your child** stay engaged in their usual coping activities (for example, family time, sports).
- **Stay with them** (or make sure the person is in a private, secure place with another caring person until you can get further help).
- **Remove any objects** that could be used in a suicide attempt (e.g., medications, guns, sharp knives, ropes or cords, cleaning products).
- **If danger** for self-harm or suicide seems immediate, call 911.

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### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- **Find a therapist**
  - CalOptima Behavioral Health: 855-877-3885
  - Insurance provider website or phone number (back of insurance card)
- **Obtain help from someone if my child is having suicidal thoughts:**
  - MHSa Suicide Prevention Line: (877) 7CRISIS or (877) 727-4747
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK or (800) 273-8255
  - Crisis Text Line 741741, type "CONNECT"
  - Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room