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MOSAIC MENTAL HEALTH TIPS

THE OFFICIAL EAP NEWSLETTER OF MOSAIC COUNSELING

WARNING SIGNS OF TEEN SUICIDE

How to Talk to Your Teen

By: Northwestern Medicine
<https://tinyurl.com/MMHT-SpecialEdition>



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Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023), despite public awareness, the suicide rate continues to rise.

Research shows that youth suicide rates increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than 5,500 youth died by suicide during the first 10 months of the pandemic, which was higher than the expected number of youth deaths by suicide had the pandemic not occurred.

Northwestern Medicine Psychologist, Nicole L. Francen Schmitt, PsyD, says the below factors have contributed to the recent increase in youth suicide rates:

- Increased access to social media and negative online media
- Feelings of isolation
- Inadequate self-care
- Stigma around mental health care



Throughout adolescence, teens and young adults experience major physical, social, emotional and psychological changes. These changes, and the subsequent feelings of stress, uncertainty, fear, confusion, hopelessness, and external pressure, can lead some young people to feel overmatched and to see suicide as their only option.

RISK FACTORS FOR TEEN SUICIDE

Adolescence is a time of change, so different risk factors can arise or be more prevalent at different times for young adults. Some risk factors include:

- Existing mental health or substance use disorder — depression, anxiety, and alcohol use are most common
- Impulsive behaviors and tendencies
- Romantic breakups
- Peer or social conflict
- Firearm in the household
- Family history of suicide
- Exposure to suicidal behaviors of others
- Prior suicide attempt(s)

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

These **red flags** can be signs of suicidal thoughts or symptoms of depression:

- Changes in eating and sleeping behaviors
- Alcohol and drug use
- Withdrawal from things they normally enjoy, friends, and family members
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Lack of response to praise
- Irritability
- Sadness or crying spells
- Posts on social media suggesting feelings of isolation or depression
- Talking about or otherwise indicating plans to die by suicide or self-harm

Special Edition

Dr. Francen Schmitt says a common misconception is that self-injurious behavior, such as cutting, burning, or picking at skin, is suicidal behavior.

"Self-injury is not necessarily always a predecessor to suicide, but it is something you should seek support from a mental health professional for your teen," says Dr. Francen Schmitt. "It's a way your teen is signifying that something is wrong and needs attention."



WAYS TO SUPPORT TEENS

- Keep an open door. Emphasize that you are always available to talk and that they can trust you. Tell them if their peer exhibit suicidal behavior that they can come to you as trusted adult.
- Empathize, don't criticize. Tell them that you understand and what they are going through is very difficult. Thank them for trusting you. Don't say, "You have nothing to be sad about," or, "You are overreacting." Instead ask, "What do you need?"
- Don't minimize their feelings. Avoid phrases like, "Just be positive," or, "Keep going. You've got this." Instead say, "How can I support you?"

-WHAT TO DO IN CRISIS-

ALWAYS CALL 911 IF YOUR TEEN IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER DUE TO A SUICIDE THREAT OR ATTEMPT.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline phone number is 988. This helpline offers 24/7 and confidential support at no cost.

The Trevor Project is a national organization that provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ youth. The organization, and its trained professionals, offer several immediate support resources, including a 24/7 crisis and suicide hotline (866.488.7386) and support via text messaging (text START to 678678).



TREATMENT OPTIONS

Threats of suicide reflect feelings of desperation and hopelessness. The person views problems as insurmountable, intolerable, and unsolvable. Suicidal comments, then, can be cries for help. **Take these statements seriously.** Help is available, and evidence-based treatments work.

If you or someone you love is experiencing feelings of hopelessness or thoughts of self-harm, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988, or visit your nearest emergency department. Remember, you are not alone.

Mosaic Counseling's Mission is to serve the mental health needs of our communities through accessible, affordable and professional counseling, by connecting individuals to personalized support in their time of need. Thanks to Mosaic Counseling, grade school, middle school, and high school kids in our communities can access the care that they need. Call Mosaic Counseling (616-842-9160) if your child is ready to be matched with a readily available and local professional therapist who will help them work through their challenges. Mosaic's model ensures that help is available, no matter what your insurance, employment, and/or financial status may be.