

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTH SUICIDE?



Potential risk factors for exhibiting suicidal behavior:

- Loss of a significant other
- Family and personal stress
- Depression and other mental health issues
- Access to weapons or other means of self-harm
- Questions regarding sexual orientation
- Previous suicide of a peer or family member
- Substance abuse
- Problems at school
- Hopelessness

Students who are having suicidal thoughts may exhibit a variety of symptoms including, but not limited to:

- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, grades, eating habits, sleeping habits, or withdrawing from friends
- Making suicidal threats – either direct “I want to die” or indirect “Things would be better if I weren’t here.”
- Appears sad or hopeless
- Self-inflicted injuries
- Concerning themes in writing or posts online
- Reckless behavior
- Giving away prized possessions
- Saying goodbye to friends and family

(It is important to remember the signs and risk factors listed above are generalities. Not all students who contemplate or die by suicide will exhibit these kinds of symptoms AND not all students who exhibit these behaviors are suicidal.)

WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP MY CHILD SAFE?

- **ASK** Talking about suicide does not make a student suicidal. Asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts gives him/her permission to talk about it. Asking sends the message that you are concerned, want to help, and opens the door for finding hope and getting help.
- **TAKE ALL SIGNS SERIOUSLY** Studies have found that more than 75% of people who die by suicide showed some of the warning signs in the weeks or months prior to their death.
- **BE AWARE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE** Monitor and limit your student’s use of social media as your family works to establish supports during this time of crisis.
- **GET HELP** If you have concerns that your child is suicidal, seek immediate help from a mental health practitioner. Suicidal people need to be evaluated by an expert in assessing risk and developing treatment plans. Parents can contact school counselors, social workers or psychologists for a listing of resources. Parents may also want to consult with their insurance company to obtain a list of mental health providers covered by their policy. When you call to make an appointment, tell the person on the phone that your child is suicidal and needs to be seen as soon as possible. Parents can also take their children to a Colorado Crisis Services Walk-In Center or a local emergency department to be evaluated.
- **LIMIT ACCESS TO WEAPONS, PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, MEDICATIONS AND OTHER MEANS** [check here for ideas about safeguarding your home.](#)
- **DO NOT LEAVE HIM OR HER ALONE** It is important that parents surround themselves with a team of supportive friends or family members who can step in and help as needed.
- **REASSURE YOUR CHILD THAT LIFE CAN GET BETTER** Many suicidal people have lost all hope that life can improve. They may have difficulty problem solving even simple issues. Remind your child that no matter how bad things are the problem can be worked out.
- **LISTEN** Avoid making statements such as “I know what it’s like” or “I understand.” Instead, make statements such as “Help me understand what life is like for you right now.”

Crisis Hotline 1-844-493-8255 Text TALK to 38255
Safe2Tell 1-877-542-7233

