



A GUIDE TO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR PARENTS

Understand that:

- Suicidal feelings can happen to anyone.
- The feelings usually come about because life is too painful for the person.
- The person wants their pain to end more than they want their life to end.
- The person feels hopeless and helpless.
- They don't feel that anyone understands how they are feeling
- Depression is probably present.
- Help is possible for suicidal feelings and for depression.

Warning Signs: (from the Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)

- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Withdrawal from friends, family and regular activities
- Violent actions, rebellious behavior or running away
- Drug and or alcohol use
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- Marked personality change. People might talk about how "different" someone is.
- Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating or a decline in the quality of schoolwork
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Not tolerating praise or rewards

Be Even More Concerned If the Teenager:

- Complains of being a bad person or feeling rotten inside
- Gives verbal hints with statements such as: "I won't be a problem for you much longer". "Nothing matters." "It's no use." "I won't see you again."
- Puts his or her affairs in order. For example: giving away favorite possessions, cleaning out his or her room, throwing away important belongings.
- Becomes suddenly cheerful after a period of depression.
- Hallucinates or has bizarre thoughts.
- Has lost someone to suicide.
- Has made prior suicide attempts.

Always take these signs and direct statements about intent to die very seriously and seek immediate help from a qualified mental health professional. (See the back of this sheet for suggestions of where to turn for help.)

Do not be afraid to ask the teen if they are thinking of suicide. You will not put the idea in their head. You will be communicating that you are trying to understand their feelings, that you care, and that you will find a way to help. The suicidal person is ambivalent. On one hand they want to live but can't see how to live and still make their pain go away. With calm reassurance you are letting them know that help is possible so that they can go on with their life in a better way. Also remember that teens don't yet have many life experiences for how to manage problems. They need adult help. You need to take charge.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP WITH A SUICIDAL TEEN

- 911 Do not hesitate to call 911 if you feel there is immediate danger or suspect that a suicide attempt has already been made. Let the professionals make the judgment as to whether there is an emergency situation or not.
- Your family doctor or pediatrician who may give you a referral to a mental health professional.
- The appropriate emergency room. Children's Hospital Medical Center (330-543-3000) is appropriate for adolescents.
- Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) (330-543-7472 or 1-866-443-7472), is a collaborative effort between Akron Children's Hospital and several community partners to coordinate intake and referral services for pediatric mental health. They are available 24 hours a day, Monday through Friday.
- Child Guidance and Family Solutions has offices throughout the county. For intake call 330-762-0591. They can provide ongoing counseling and psychiatric assistance.
- Pastoral Counseling Service also offers counseling and mental health assistance. For an appointment call 330-996-4600.
- SUPPORT Hotline (330-434-9144) is a crisis hotline, sponsored by Portage Path Behavioral Health that is available in Summit County 24-hours a day. If that number is long distance, or if you are anywhere else in the country call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273 TALK (8255) and you will automatically be connected to the closest certified crisis line.

RELIABLE WEBSITES SPECIFICALLY FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION RESOURCES

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)	http://www.suicidology.org
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP)	http://www.afsp.org
Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE)	http://save.org
Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network (SPAN)	http://spanusa.org/
Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)	http://www.sprc.org

THE SUMMIT COUNTY SUICIDE PREVENTION COALITION

This information is brought to you courtesy of the Summit County Suicide Prevention Coalition and the County of Summit Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board. The coalition is made up of concerned individuals who want to eliminate suicide in Summit County. To learn more about the coalition or to be added to the coalition's e-mail list for information and upcoming events, contact preventsuicide@admboard.org or call 330-762-3500.

