

Suicide Prevention & Awareness: What Parents & Caregivers Need to Know

APS Parent Resource Center

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01 Risk Factors

Mental illness	Environmental Risks	Family stress	Situational Crises
Depression Conduct Disorders Substance abuse	Access to lethal means (i.e. firearms)	Illness Divorce/Separation Financial difficulties etc.	Traumatic death of a loved one Physical or sexual abuse

02 Protective Factors

Feeling connected (family & friends) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We all need connection and community--even introverts! Those who are less connected have worse mental health It's about the sense of connection, not the numbers All people, and especially youth, want to feel that they matter and have value within their community Challenge it when teens say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I hate people" "I don't need friends" "I don't want the drama" Help teens connect with others through mutual interest. Look for natural opportunities. 	
Access to mental health support	Cultural or religious beliefs that promote healthy living
Having coping skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with helping you to improve their sleep hygiene Help teens engage in an "approach" coping style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge that motivation comes and goes Remind youth of their resilience Name and talk about avoidance when you see it Help youth find what seems "doable" and start with that 	
Limited access to lethal means	Sense of purpose & good self-esteem

03 Warning Signs

Suicidal Threats Direct or indirect statements	Prior Suicidal Behaviors
Suicidal Notes or Plans	Making Final Arrangements i.e. Giving away prized possessions, visiting or calling people to say goodbye
Sudden changes in behavior, appearance or mood	Preoccupation with Death
Withdrawing from activities	Increased use of alcohol/drugs
Sleeping too much or too little	Sudden improvement or Relief

04 Ways to Help

Build resilience

Teach and model healthy habits for mental health - talk openly and seek therapy is warranted. Check in regularly with your child regarding mental health and feelings

Listen Non-Judgmentally

Listen more and say less. Withhold judgment and advice. Validate feelings and give messages of reassurance and resiliency

Reassuring and Reframing

Reassuring

- This is really just providing hope through normalizing and recognizing things can get better
- Remind them of their resilience

Reframing

- Identify extreme thinking together
- Challenge extreme thinking

Suicide Prevention: If you notice warning signs

- Remain calm
- Ask youth directly if they are thinking about suicide
- Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory
- Listen and reassure them that there is help and **they won't feel like this forever**
- Avoid judgment
- Provide constant supervision. **DO NOT** leave the youth alone
- **GET HELP** - call 911 for immediate danger! Call 988 for 24/7 mental health support

Asking youth directly about suicide

