

TOO YOUNG TO DIE: PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE *Help Save A Life, Maybe Even Yours...*

In America, a life is lost to suicide every 18 minutes...that's nearly 30,000 people each year. And every minute, another attempt is made...that's 1,500 attempts per day. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for people 15 to 24 years of age. Nearly all people (90%) who die by suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder (clinical or manic depression) that is treatable. Therefore, **most suicides can be prevented.** That's the good news, so long as you get involved. Most people contemplating suicide don't believe they can be helped, so **it's up to YOU to help** them.

While some suicides occur without any outward warning, most do not. More often, suicidal individuals give warning signs of their intention and confide their depression or suicidal thoughts to a friend. They talk about suicide directly or indirectly by saying things like "My family would be better off without me," "I wish I was never born" or "I wish my life was over." Unfortunately, because many people often feel that seeking help for a friend would betray a trust, many people who might have otherwise saved a friend or loved one are instead left with the guilt of a friend's death. Don't let this be you.

The most effective way to prevent a friend or loved one from taking their life is to recognize when they are at risk, take the warning signs seriously and know how to respond. Suicide attempts often occur shortly after stressful events: after someone has been disciplined, after a fight with a boyfriend, girlfriend or parent, after a situation that leads to extreme disappointment or rejection, after he or she fails an exam or finds out they didn't get a job. If you believe a friend or loved one is thinking about suicide, tell someone...tell anyone. You may lose your friendship, but you'll save your friend. Read the below suicide prevention guide carefully. **Share this. Copy it. Hand it out. E-mail it. Post it on Facebook / Twitter. You can help save a life, maybe even yours...**

1 RECOGNIZE THE WARNING SIGNS

There is no typical suicide victim. It happens to both young and old, rich and poor, male and female. Fortunately, there are some common warning signs which, when acted upon, can save lives. If your friend or loved has five or more of the symptoms listed below, he or she is depressed and may be suicidal:

- Has attempted suicide before.
- Talks about committing suicide.
- Has trouble eating or experiences a change in weight or appetite.
- Has trouble sleeping, either too little or too much.
- Has trouble functioning, concentrating, thinking or making decisions.
- Has fatigue or loss of energy.
- Exhibits drastic changes in behavior.
- Withdraws from friends and / or social activities.
- Loses interest in personal appearance.
- Loses interest in hobbies, work, sports, school, etc.
- Has feelings of sadness, hopelessness, worthlessness or desperation.
- Has recently experienced a severe loss (death of a friend, loved one or parent).
- Takes unnecessary risks.
- Increases use of alcohol or drugs.
- Is preoccupied with death and dying.
- Prepares for death by making out a will and final arrangements.
- Gives away prized possessions.

3 SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

People contemplating suicide often believe they cannot be helped and may avoid getting help after the initial crisis. Therefore, you may have to do more to help them. They need continued support:

- Encourage them to see a school counselor, psychiatrist, psychologist or therapist.
- Offer to accompany your friend or loved one on this visit. If you go, they're more likely to go.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or call 1-888-333-AFSP

FACTS ABOUT DEPRESSION

- 90% of all people who commit suicide have a treatable illness (clinical or manic depression).
- Although most depressed people are not suicidal, most suicidal people are depressed.
- About 15% of the population will suffer from depression at some time during their lifetime.
- An estimated 15 million Americans currently suffer from depression.
- 25% of females will develop clinical depression during their lifetime.
- 30% of all clinically depressed patients attempt suicide. 50% of these attempts result in death.
- Estimates suggest that 85% of people with depression respond positively to treatment.
- Nearly all patients gain some relief from their symptoms after treatment.

2 TAKE THE WARNING SIGNS SERIOUSLY

75% of all suicide victims give some warning of their intentions to a friend or loved one, so every suicide threat and attempt must be taken seriously. Here are some ways to be helpful to someone who is threatening suicide:

- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Ask. Don't be afraid to ask if he or she is considering suicide, or even if they have a particular plan or method in mind.
- Continue to ask what is troubling them until they talk about it.
- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen, but don't be sworn to secrecy.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't judge. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong.
- Don't attempt to argue anyone out of suicide.
- Don't give a lecture on the value of life.
- Don't dare him or her to attempt suicide.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available, that they are not alone.
- Explain that suicidal feelings are temporary, that depression can be treated and that problems can be solved.
- Remove any weapons, guns, drugs, pills or sharp objects from their room.
- Tell someone else...tell anyone.
- Saving a life is more important than betraying one's trust...

4 IN AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS...

- Take your friend or loved one to the nearest hospital Emergency Room, clinic or psychiatric facility. TODAY, learn how to get to your closest Emergency Room.
- If you cannot travel, Dial 911, your local emergency number or 1-800-273-8255 and speak to trained counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (also 800-273-TALK)
- DO NOT leave your friend or loved one alone until help is available.

RELATED FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND FIREARMS

- Alcoholism is a factor in about 30% of all suicides.
- Approximately 7% of those with alcohol dependency will die by suicide.
- In 2000, suicide outnumbered homicide (murder) by 5 to 3.
- People with AIDS have a suicide risk up to 20 times more than those who don't.
- Suicide by firearm accounts for nearly 57% of all firearm deaths in America.
- Firearms are the most frequent method of suicide for boys and girls aged 10 to 14 years.
- Most gun owners keep a firearm in their home for "protection." However, 83% of firearm deaths in such homes are the result of suicide, often by someone other than the gun owner.

Too Young To Die was created by Deep Elm Records and its Artists to provide education, increase recognition and prevent youth suicide. A portion of the proceeds from Deep Elm's TYTD tour revenue and the sale of CDs and merchandise was donated to The American Foundation For Suicide Prevention, a not-for-profit organization. For more information, visit www.afsp.org



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