



Teen Suicide Prevention Fact Sheet

602-248-8336 (TEEN) or 1-800-248-8336 (TEEN)

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Protective Factors Reduce Risk

Protective factors can help contribute to a teen's resiliency and reduce the risk of suicide. These factors include:

- Family and community support
- Connection to or participation in school activities
- Hope for the future
- Basic life skills, including coping, problem solving and conflict resolution
- Access to effective care for mental, physical and substance use concerns
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide

Warning Signs

Warning signs a teen could be considering suicide include:

- Talking about death, wanting to die or feelings of falling apart
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Feeling depressed, sad or hopeless for more than two weeks
- Extreme mood swings
- Isolating or withdrawing from friends, family or usual social activities
- Drastic changes in usual behavior

The risk of suicide is greater if these behaviors are new or have increased because they seem related to a painful event, a loss or a change in the teen's life

What To Do

If you notice any of the preceding warning signs, or if you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, take the following steps:

- **Seek help.** If you suspect a child is in immediate danger of self-inflicted harm or of acting on suicidal thoughts, call 911 or take the child to an emergency room. If immediate safety is not a concern, call Teen Lifeline at (602) 248-8336 (TEEN) or seek a referral to mental health services or counseling.
- **Ask questions.** Don't be afraid to ask your child directly if he or she is having suicidal thoughts. Asking the question will not plant the idea of suicide in a teenager's head.
- **Communicate openly.** Talk to your child about the feelings they are experiencing, without passing judgement or acting like the teen is being dramatic. When speaking with your teenager, using nonjudgmental language. An even tone of voice and engaging body language can help the teen to open up.
- **Validate feelings.** Allow the teen to be heard without dismissing what they are saying as merely a fleeting emotion or an overreaction.
- **Create safety.** Take safety measures to minimize threats to your child's safety. Lock up all medications, sharp objects and poisonous chemicals, and secure all firearms, including storing ammunition separately.