



Delaware County Suicide Prevention Awareness Task Force

Teen Suicide

What's the problem?

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youths. The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center found that almost 1 in 5 teens had thought about suicide, about 1 in 6 had made plans for suicide, and more than 1 in 12 had attempted suicide in the last year. About 8 of 10 teens who complete suicide ask for help before attempting suicide.

What are the key risk factors of suicide?

These are factors commonly found among suicidal youths (*absence does not mean no risk*).

• History of suicide, attempts	• Criminal justice or legal problems
• History of abuse, violence, trauma	• Chronic illness, disability
• Family relationship problems	• White male; Latina teen
• Depression, other mental illness	• Access to firearms
• Humiliation, shame, status loss	• Low self-esteem, poor coping skills
• Trouble concentrating in class	• Dropping off teams/activities

What are some important protective factors?

These are factors that offset risk factors and deter the occurrence of suicidal behavior.

• Strong family or social ties	• Strong self-esteem, sense of self-worth
• Optimism, resilience	• Willingness to seek help
• Emotional stability (not impulsive)	• Religiosity, spirituality

What are the warning signs of suicide?

Contact a mental health or medical provider if you encounter any of these behaviors:

• Hopelessness	• Rage, anger, revenge, recklessness
• Feeling trapped/no way out/helplessness	• Increasing alcohol and/or drug use
• Withdrawal from family, friends	• Anxiety, agitation, sleep problems
• Dramatic mood changes	• No reason for living

What are the immediate danger signs of suicide?

Immediately call Project REACH at 610-352-4703 or dial 9-1-1 if you encounter:

- Someone threatening to hurt or kill herself or himself
- Someone looking for ways to take her or his life (i.e., a gun, pills, other lethal means)
- Someone talking, writing, or drawing about death, dying, or suicide

What can you do to help prevent suicide?

- Never agree to keep a friend's suicidal feelings a secret.
- Don't try to handle a friend's crisis alone – get adult help.
- Make sure that all family members know the warning and danger signs and what to do.

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