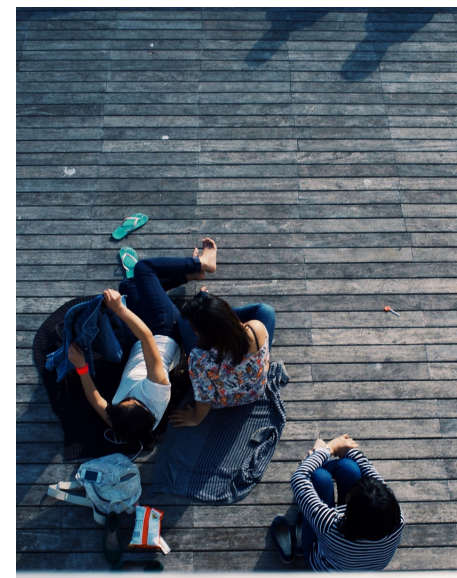


RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Kevin & Margaret
HINES
FOUNDATION



In the next 24 hours
1,439 teens will attempt
suicide

MYTH: Asking about suicide causes suicidal behavior

FACT: Addressing the topic of suicide in a caring, empathetic, and nonjudgmental way shows that you are taking your child seriously and responding to their emotional pain

NEED HELP NOW?

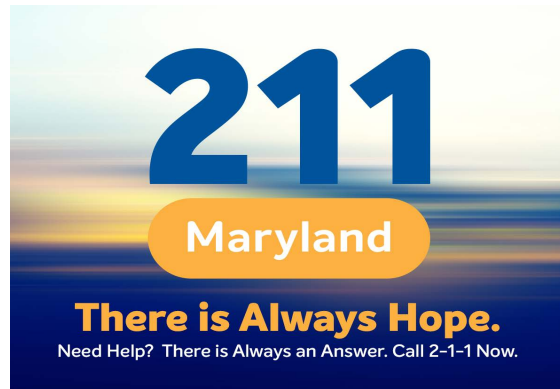
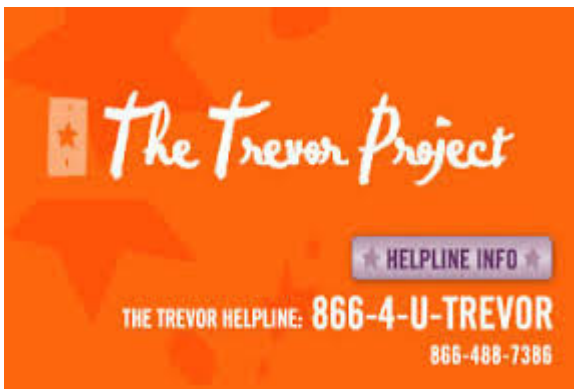
If you or someone you know needs help immediately, call 911, 301-738-2255 or 1-800-273 TALK (8255).

You can also contact The Trevor Project, specializing in supporting the LGBTQ community: call 866.488.7386 or text “Trevor” to 1-866-4-U-TREVOR.

If someone is threatening their own life or someone else’s life, this is an emergency. If you feel comfortable, you should bring your friend to the Emergency Room, or call 911 or other emergency services immediately. If it’s safe to do so, stay with that person or do what you can to contact them or find someone to stay with them until help arrives.

If you see someone behaving dramatically differently than usual, it may signal that this person needs help. If you have a gut feeling that something is not right, you should act on it.

If you or someone you know is struggling, but not in immediate danger, reach out to a mental health/healthcare professional or trusted adult as soon as possible.



WHAT TO DO

Youth who feel suicidal are not likely to seek help directly; however, parents, school personnel, and peers can recognize the warning signs and take immediate action to keep the youth safe. When a youth gives signs that they may be considering suicide, the following actions should be taken:

- Remain calm.
- Ask the youth directly if he or she is thinking about suicide (e.g., "Are you thinking of suicide?").
- Focus on your concern for their well-being and avoid being accusatory.
- Listen.
- Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- Do not judge.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm.
- Get help: No one should ever agree to keep a youth's suicidal thoughts a secret and instead should tell an appropriate caregiving adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school psychologist. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to a school-employed mental health professional or administrator.



PREVENTING YOUTH SUICIDE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among school age youth. However, suicide is preventable. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs of their distress. Parents, teachers, and friends are in a key position to pick up on these signs and get help. Most importantly, never take these warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret. When all adults and students in the school community are committed to making suicide prevention a priority, and are empowered to take the correct actions, we can help youth before they engage in behavior with irreversible consequences.

Parental Participation

Parents are crucial members of a suicide risk assessment as they often have information critical to making an appropriate assessment of risk, including mental health history, family dynamics, recent traumatic events, and previous suicidal behaviors. If a school notifies a parent of their child's risk for suicide and provides referral information, parents should seek mental health assistance for their child and:

- **Continue to take threats seriously:** Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent "they didn't mean it." Avoid assuming behavior is simply attention seeking (but at the same time avoid reinforcing suicide threats; e.g., by allowing the student who has threatened suicide to drive because they were denied access to the car).
- **Access school supports:** If parents are uncomfortable with following through on referrals, they can give the school psychologist permission to contact the referral agency, provide referral information, and follow up on the visit.
- **Maintain communication with the school:** After such an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place for your child.

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

Although far from perfect predictors, certain characteristics are associated with increased odd of having suicidal thoughts.

These include:

- Mental illness including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse
- Family stress/dysfunction
- Environmental risks, including the presence of a firearm in the home
- Situational crises (such as, traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence)

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

Most suicidal youth demonstrate observable behaviors that signal their suicidal thinking.

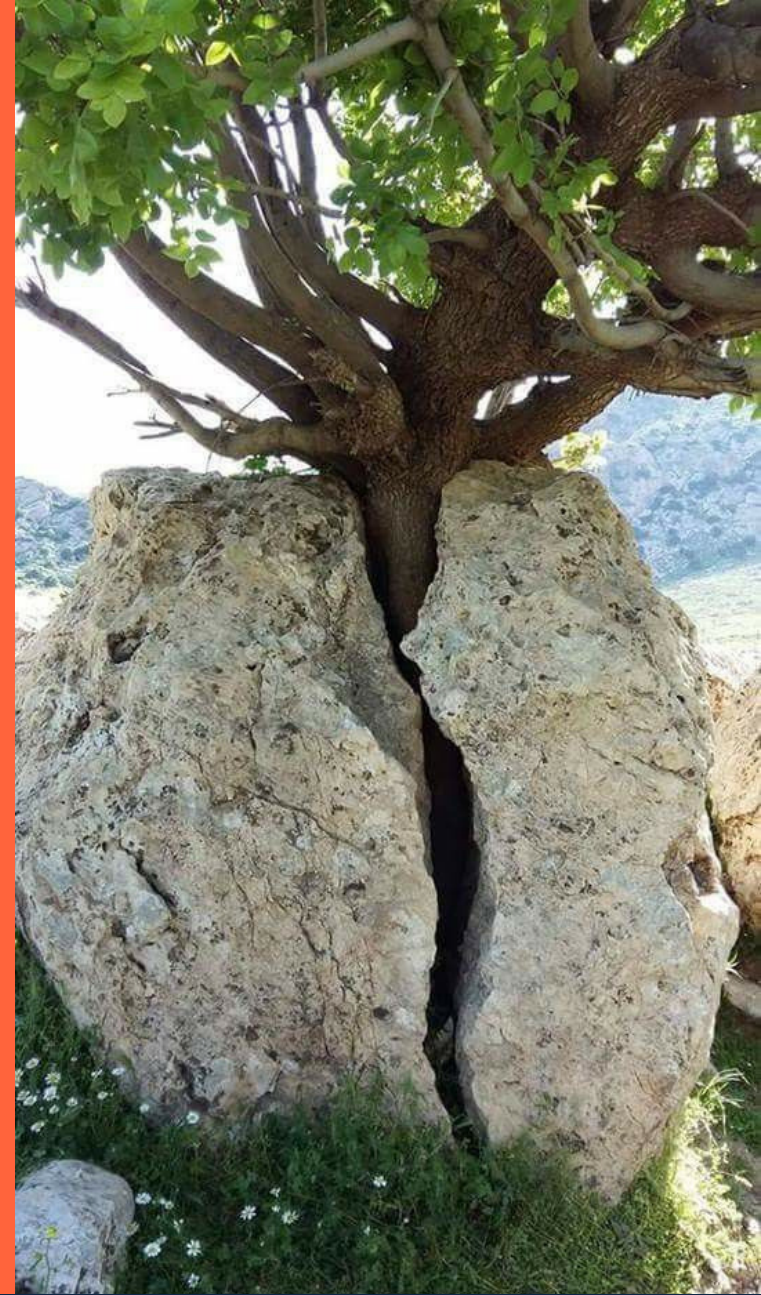
These include:

- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Displaying severe/overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Showing worrisome behavioral cues or marked changes in behavior, particularly in the presence of the warning signs above
Specifically, this includes significant:
 - Withdrawal from or changing in social connections/situations
 - Changes in sleep (increased or decreased) Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
 - Recent increased agitation or irritability

RESILIENCY FACTORS

The presence of resiliency factors can lessen the potential of risk factors to lead to suicidal ideation and behaviors. Once a child or adolescent is considered at risk, schools, families, and friends should work to build these factors in and around the youth. These include:

- Family support and cohesion, including good communication
- Peer support and close social networks
- School and community connectedness
- Cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote healthy living
- Adaptive coping and problem-solving skills, including conflict-resolution
- General life satisfaction, good self-esteem, sense of purpose
- Easy access to effective medical and mental health resources



We Can All Prevent Suicide

Hope Can Happen

Suicide is not inevitable for anyone. By starting the conversation, providing support, and directing help to those who need it, we can prevent suicides and save lives.

We Can All Take Action

Evidence shows that providing support services, talking about suicide, reducing access to means of self-harm, and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others.

Crisis Centers are Critical

By offering immediate counseling to everyone that may need it, local crisis centers provide invaluable support at critical times and connect individuals to local services.

Suicide Statistics

While this data is the most accurate we have, we estimate the numbers to be higher. Stigma surrounding suicide leads to underreporting, and data collection methods critical to suicide prevention need to be improved.

SUICIDE IS THE SECOND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10 AND 24.

MORE TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS DIE FROM SUICIDE THAN FROM HEART DISEASE, AIDS, BIRTH DEFECTS, PNEUMONIA, INFLUENZA, CANCER, AND LUNG DISEASE COMBINED.

17% OF TEENAGERS HAVE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED ATTEMPTING SUICIDE

EVERY 40 SECONDS, SOMEONE DIES BY SUICIDE GLOBALLY

Hotlines:

According to experts, symptoms of depression or other mental illnesses in children are not to be ignored. If you're concerned about your child, talk to them and seek professional help immediately. Below is a list of resources:

Montgomery County Hotline: Phone/Text: 301-738-2255 or
Chat: suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/

Provides confidential and anonymous support 24 hours a day/365 days a year by trained counselors.

National Suicide Hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Both toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotlines which connect you to a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center.

National Alliance of the Mentally Ill: 1-800-950-6264

Toll-free, confidential hotline operating Mon.-Fri., 10 am- 6 pm (EST). Trained volunteers provide information, referrals, and support to anyone with questions about mental illness.

Websites:

The Jed Foundation

The Jed Foundation offers programs and resources that will help you learn more about your child's emotional health and what you can do to support them if they are struggling.

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Under the link to "Facts for Families," you can find detailed information on the symptoms of adolescent mental illness, and where to seek help.

Not My Kid

A non-profit organization born out of the real life experience of a family dealing with substance abuse with their teenage son, this site provides information and resources for families about teens at risk for destructive behavior, including a list of warning signs and symptoms, and tips on how to take preventative action.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

A go-to resource for comprehensive information on all diagnosable mental illnesses, statistics, government-funded research and trials, and information about treatment. The "Child & Adolescent Mental Health" page lists mental disorders that affect young people, and includes research and reports on each topic.

Protecting Your Child's Mental Health: What Can Parents Do?

A Parenting guide from the JED Foundation.

http://www.jedfoundation.org/assets/Programs/Program_downloads/parentsguide.pdf

Websites:

About Our Kids: New York University's Child Study Center

Devoted to improving the treatment of child psychiatric disorders through scientific practice, research, and education, and to eliminating the stigma of being or having a child with a psychiatric disorder. The Center's website offers parents thorough information on when and how to seek help, definitions and symptoms of mental illnesses, and a list of links to helpful resources online.

National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots organization for people with mental illness and their families. Founded in 1979, NAMI has affiliates in every state and in more than 1,100 local communities across the country.

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

A non-profit organization dedicated to reducing loss of life from suicide. Its website offers tips on how to reach out to those at-risk for suicide, as well as helpful statistics and resources in every state.

The Suicide Prevention Action Network

A non-profit organization dedicated to preventing suicide through public education and awareness, community action and federal, state and local grassroots advocacy. Its website serves as an online resource center aimed at providing authoritative and problem-specific information about suicide prevention.

Families for Depression Awareness

An organization that helps families recognize and cope with depressive disorders, and prevent suicide. Its website contains helpful resources, and inspirational stories about recovering from mental illness.



Our Sources

<https://www.jedfoundation.org>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention/index.shtml>

www.nasponline.org

<https://www.settogo.org>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources>

<http://youmatter.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

<https://afsp.org>

<https://www.cdc.gov>

<http://zerosuicide.sprc.org>