

Suicide Prevention Month Psych Support Series: Parents Preventing Teen Suicide

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The Youth Mental Health Crisis



Prior to the pandemic, there was already an increasing trend in adolescent suicide

- Between 2007 and 2018, suicide rates among youth ages 10-24 increased by 57%
- Increasing rates of high schoolers were reporting increased feelings of sadness, hopelessness, serious considerations of attempting suicide, and creating a plan for suicide
- **The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these trends**
 - Rates of depression and anxiety have doubled among adolescents
 - Emergency department visits for suicide attempts in early 2021 were 51% higher for adolescent girls and 4% higher for adolescent boys than the prior year
 - The Surgeon General issued an Advisory on Youth Mental Health and the AAP, AACAP, and CHA jointly declared a national state of emergency in 2021

Suicide in Children and Teens

- Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** for children, adolescents, and young adults age 10-to-24-year-olds.
- Nearly 20% of high school students report serious thoughts of suicide and 9% have made a suicide attempt
- The majority of children and adolescents who attempt suicide have a **significant mental health disorder**



Suicide Risk Factors

- Family or personal history of suicide
- Adverse childhood experiences, discrimination
- Mental health conditions, such as depression
- Substance use
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Family or peer conflict
- Medical illness
- Unsupported social environment for LGBTQ youth
- Bullying
- Unsafe media portrayals of suicide
- Acute loss or rejection
- Suicide in their school or family
- Access to lethal means

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Things To Look Out For

- Preoccupation with death and dying: "I wish I was dead" or "I won't be a problem for you much longer."
- Feeling hopeless, feeling like a burden, or having no reason to live
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Frequent or pervasive sadness, anxiety, agitation, irritability
- Increased substance use
- Withdrawal, isolation from friends, family, and regular activities
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Decline in the quality of schoolwork
- Giving away prized possessions
- Posting on social media about suicide

Any child or adolescent with suicidal thoughts or plans should be evaluated immediately by a trained and qualified mental health professional.



Suicide Protective Factors

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- Fear of death or dying due to pain and suffering
- Religious or spiritual beliefs
- Ability to cope with stress, problem-solving skills
- Connections to family, friends, and community
- Supportive relationships with caregivers
- Engaged in school or work
- Responsibility to family or pets
- Engaged in and responsive to mental health treatment
- Thinking about the future
- Limited access to lethal means



Talking to your Teen about Suicide

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- Know it's SAFE to ask your teen about suicide
- Asking about suicide will not "put the idea into their head"
- Raise the topic in a calm, non-judgmental way
- Use a space where the teen feels safe and comfortable
- Be straightforward
- Check in - Slow down or pause if your teen becomes confused or looks upset
- Be comfortable with silence and take time to listen



Things you can do to help your Teen

- Intervene if you notice your child is struggling
- Try not to dismiss what you're seeing as "teenage drama"
- Seek professional help right away
- Listen even when your teen is not talking
- Respond with empathy and understanding
- Keep your home safe (remove firearms, lock medications)
- Encourage your teen to spend time with family and friends
- Encourage exercise
- If your child enters treatment, focus on creating hope
- Remind each other that healing takes time
 - be patient, kind, and self-forgiving



Lethal Means Restriction

How to Safeguard Your Home

If your child is experiencing a mental health problem or life crisis, these simple steps can help protect your family and possibly save your child's life.

STORE FIREARMS OFFSITE

- Ask a trusted friend or family member to keep them temporarily until the situation improves.
- Call your local police precinct, gun range, or shooting club to see if they will offer temporary storage.
- If you can't store the firearms away from the home, store them unloaded and locked in a gun safe or lock box. You can also lock them using a cable or trigger lock. Locking devices using combinations are safer than those using keys.

LOCK UP MEDICATIONS

- Store all medications in a lock box or locked medicine cabinet.
- To dispose of unused medications, locate a medicine take-back program in your community or follow the FDA guidance. Mix the medicines with kitty litter or used coffee grounds in a sealable bag. Then throw away the mixture in the trash.

PROVIDE SUPPORT

- Pay attention to your child's moods and behavior.
- If you notice significant changes, ask them if they're thinking about suicide.
- If you think your child is in crisis, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- Make sure your child knows how to access the suicide prevention lifeline.

For crisis support or information call the Helpline Center, (800) 339-4387.

MEDICATIONS



Lock and limit.

Fact: Teens who attempt suicide use medications more than any other method.

SUPPORT



Listen and ask.
Fact: Millions of kids and teens seriously consider attempting suicide every year.

FIREARMS



Remove. Lock.

Fact: Firearms are used in close to half of teen suicide deaths.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

if you're concerned that someone you care about is at risk of suicide.

Visit sdsuicideprevention.org



347 free and confidential.
1-800-273-8255

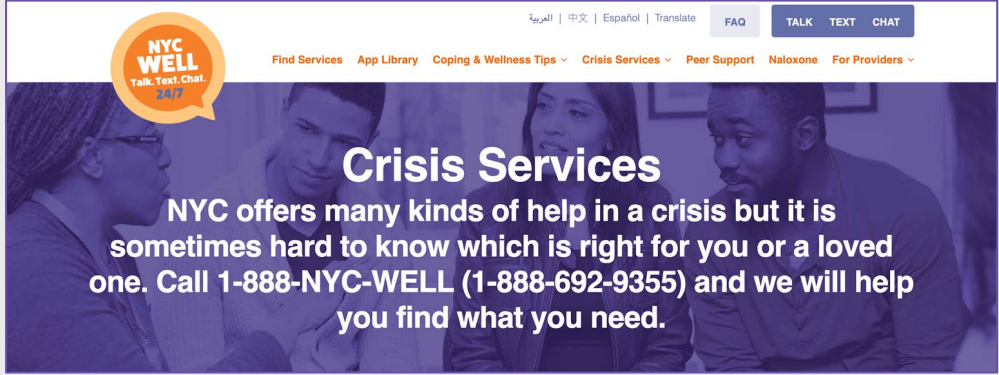
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:
Call 911 or visit your local emergency room.



988 Suicide & Crisis Hotline



NYC Urgent Care Services



NYC WELL
Talk, Text, Chat
24/7

العربية | 中文 | Español | Translate

FAQ TALK TEXT CHAT

Find Services App Library Coping & Wellness Tips Crisis Services Peer Support Naloxone For Providers

Crisis Services

NYC offers many kinds of help in a crisis but it is sometimes hard to know which is right for you or a loved one. Call 1-888-NYC-WELL (1-888-692-9355) and we will help you find what you need.



Primary Care Resources



healthychildren.org

Powered by pediatricians. Trusted by parents.
from the American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/Pages/default.aspx>

Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention

[Home](#) / [Patient Care](#) / Suicide: Blueprint for Youth Suicide Prevention

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/blueprint-for-youth-suicide-prevention/>



Mental Health Resources

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)
3615 Wisconsin Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016
800/333-7636
www.aacap.org
- American Psychiatric Association (APA)
1400 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
202/682-6220
<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families>
- National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
12320 Parklawn Drive
Rockville, MD
240-403-1901
www.ffcmh.org
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI)
3803 N Fairfax Drive, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22203
800/950-6264
www.nami.org
- National Mental Health Association (NMHA)
1021 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2971
800/969-6642
www.nmha.org





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