

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION: HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

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Youth Suicide by the Numbers

10-24 yrs. old



High-Risk Groups



Foster Youth
LGBTQ Youth
Homeless Youth
Youth with Mental Illness
and/or Substance Abuse
Disorders



Warning Signs

Recent California Healthy Kids Survey

- **School Climate, Substance Use, and Well-being Among California Students 2017-2018 :**
 - Chronic sadness occurred among **24%** of 7th graders and around **30%** of 9th/11th graders within the past year.
 - Almost **17%** of the high school students had seriously contemplated suicide.

Putting it Into Perspective



True or False?

Talking openly about suicide will cause it.

If someone decides that they want to take their own life, there's nothing we can do to stop them.

If someone talks about suicide they don't need to be taken seriously.

There are signs that we can look for that may indicate someone is considering suicide.

Anyone can learn to help someone who is struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Does Language Matter?

Committed vs. ***Died by or of suicide:***

- Suicide is a means of death and is neither a crime nor a sin. It is not "committed".

Failed attempt vs. ***Survive an attempted suicide:***

- When one does not die from an attempt one is a survivor of an attempt. This is not a "failed attempt".

Suicide Awareness: Key Terms

Warning Signs- the early *observable signs* that indicate increased risk of suicide for someone in the near-term. (Within hours or days.)

Risk Factors- Stressful events or situations that may increase the likelihood of a suicide attempt or death. (Not predictive!)

Protective Factors- Personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential of suicide and other high-risk behaviors.

Suicide Prevention Warning Signs

- Talking, joking, or a note indicating a desire to die
- Composition or artwork involving death
- Previous suicide attempt(s)
- Statement of hopelessness or helplessness
- Expression of negative attitudes toward self
- Expression of a lack of future orientation
- Withdrawal from families or social network
- Giving away of possessions to friends or families
- When they know, respect, or idealize someone who has attempted suicide or committed suicide
- Anniversary of a tragic event



Suicide Prevention Warning Signs

Changes



- Weight
- Sleep
- Physical Appearance (Neglected/Disheveled)
- Personality Changes
- Lack of interest in previously pleasurable activities
- Unexplained decline in academic performance
- Increased absenteeism
- Increased behavioral issues or issues with teacher
- Impulsive/Risky/Reckless behavior
- Wide mood swings, unexpected displays of emotion
- Sudden sense of calm or happiness after a period of sadness or depression

Suicide Prevention Warning Signs

Direct Clues:	Less Direct Clues:
"I wish I was dead"	"Life's just too hard"
"I'm going to end it all"	"You'd be better off without me"
"I'm going to kill myself"	"I can't take the pain"
"If...doesn't happen, I am going to end it"	"What's the point?"

Clear Signs of A Suicidal Crisis

1. Someone threatening to hurt or kill themselves
2. Someone looking for the means to kill themselves
(gun, pills, rope etc.)
3. Someone showing clear distress/ agitation/ anxiety
(having a plan, giving away possessions, etc.)

Get the facts and take action!

Call **911** if lethal means is present

Call **Crisis Hotline** if no means present

Orange County Crisis Prevention Hotline

1-877-7CRISIS or 1-877-727-4747

Suicide Prevention Risk Factors

Social & Family System Changes

- Family problems/ history of familial suicide
- Parental divorce
- Change in the child's role in the family
- Losing a close friend*
- Negative school experience*
- Break up with boyfriend or girlfriend*
- Change to a new school*

School Factors

- Academic performance
- Midterms & Finals
- Testing, SAT, AP
- Graduation/College
- Competitiveness (academic/extracurricular)
- Overscheduling
- Bullying
- Social media*

Suicide Prevention Risk Factors

On Going Issues of Concern

- Chronic health problems
- Frequent complaints
- Self inflicted injuries such as burns, scratches, cuts
- History of emotional/sexual/physical abuse
- Mental Illness
- Psychiatric depression
- Substance Abuse
- Poor coping strategies overall

Key Consideration - Risk Factors

Suicide Contagion:

The process by which one suicide may contribute to another



Key Considerations

Suicide Contagion:

- Students of concern may be:
 - Those with a history of suicide attempts
 - Are dealing with stressful life events
 - Were eyewitnesses to the death
 - Are family members or close friends of the deceased
 - Received communication from the deceased foretelling the suicide
 - May have had argument/fight/bullying incident with deceased

PRACTICE TIME!

SCENARIO #1

Latosha was a 13-year-old girl.

Her parents had recently divorced, which forced her to move to a new community. She hated the new community and didn't make any new friends. Her sister Tiffany, her 'only' friend, was going away to college in the fall, which made her feel even worse.

Latosha was having trouble sleeping, her grades were falling, and she was crying almost everyday. She tried to tell her dad and new stepmom that she was feeling terrible, but they said that things would get better if she would just give it some time.

She gave her sister her birthstone ring, and said she wouldn't need it anymore.

SCENARIO #2

Ryan was an 17-year-old who seemed to "have it all." He was popular at school, had lots of friends, and his grades were always straight "A". He was a member of the soccer and golf teams, and president of a school club. He strived to be the very best that he could. Since his father had died, he wanted to be a good example for his younger siblings.

He filled out many college applications, but because of a poor SAT score, just couldn't seem to get admitted to the top colleges. Ryan started to feel very anxious and sad. He told his brother and sisters that "it just wasn't worth it anymore" and went for a drive. His pickup was found, totaled. He had been thrown 50 feet and died instantly.

The officer brought up the fact that it didn't look like an accidental death. His mother denied that it was a suicide, insisting that her son had everything to live for and probably just fell asleep.

re•sil•ience:



the ability to bounce back when faced
with stress or pressure.

Protective Factors

- **Skills** to think, communicate, solve problems, manage anger and other negative emotions
- **Purpose & value** in life; hope for the future, pets, work/ life focus
- **Personal characteristics**- health, positive outlook, healthy choices, spirituality or religious belief
- **Supports**- parents, friends, mentors, and other caring adults
- **Safe Environment** – restricted access to lethal means; positive school climate



PARENT
connectedness

CONNECTIONS
to other
NON-PARENTAL
ADULTS



academic
ACHIEVEMENT



SCHOOL
SAFETY

PROTECTIVE
FACTORS



CLOSENESS
to **CARING**
FRIENDS



awareness
of and
ACCESS
to local
HEALTH
SERVICES



NEIGHBOURHOOD
SAFETY



overall
resilience

What Can You or Parents Do?

3 Helpful Steps

1) Show You Care—Listen carefully—Be genuine

“I’m concerned about you . . . about how you feel.”

2) Ask the Question—Be direct, caring and non-confrontational

“Are you thinking about suicide?”

3) Get Help—Do not leave him/her alone

“You’re not alone. Let me help you.”

Say This Instead.....

AVOID	Say this Instead
"There are other people who have it worse than you. "	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "How can I help you?"• "I understand you've been through a lot but you will get through this and I am going to be there with you every step of the way."
"You'll get over it, I get sad too sometimes."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• " I'm here for you. You're not alone. It's OK to feel that way you do and I'm sorry I can't understand better. Please know I do care for and love you."
"Are you doing this for attention?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Thank you for sharing this with me. That is very brave of you to share how you are feeling. "• " I hope you keep talking to me about what you are going through."

What Can You or Parents Do?

Do's

- ⦿ Listen & express your concern
- ⦿ Remain calm
- ⦿ Accept the person's feelings as they are
- ⦿ Keep open lines of communication
- ⦿ Explore resources
- ⦿ Do not be afraid to talk about suicide directly
- ⦿ Ask them if they have developed a plan for suicide
- ⦿ Know the risk factors and warning signs of youth suicide
- ⦿ Take immediate action if the youth makes any indication of potential self-harm
- ⦿ **Stay close & supervise youth**

DO NOT LET CHILD LEAVE

What Should You or Parents Avoid?

DON'T

- Don't sound shocked
- Don't offer empty promises
- Don't cheer him/her up
- Don't debate morality
- Don't assure things will improve
- Don't keep it a secret
- DO NOT LET CHILD LEAVE



What Can You or Parents Do?

- **Eliminate availability of means**
- **Seek Professional Help**
 - Consult a physician or mental health professional immediately.
 - Take the person to an emergency room or walk-in clinic at a psychiatric hospital.
 - **5150/5585**- Involuntary Psychiatric Hold
 - If the above options are unavailable, call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- **Follow-up on Treatment**
 - Child may need your continuing support to pursue treatment after an initial contact.

When in need Remember CPP

1. **CAT – Centralized Assessment Team**
 - Toll Free Number: (866) 830 6011 or Call: (714) 517 6353
 - Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
 - <http://ochealthinfo.com/bhs/about/amhs/ces>
2. **P: Police** (Local Police and/or School Resource Officer)
3. **P: Parents**

**If person is in crisis right now, CALL 911*

5150/5585 (Involuntary Psychiatric Hold)

Section **5150/5585** is a section of the California Welfare and Institutions Code that allows a qualified officer or clinician to involuntarily confine a person deemed (or feared) to have a mental disorder that makes them a danger to him or her self, and/or others and/or gravely disabled.

Resources

Suicide National Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK or 1-800-SUICIDE

• Act.

- If you think the person might harm him- or herself, do not leave the person alone.
- Say, "I'm going to get you some help."
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK. You will be connected to the nearest available crisis center. Or...
- Go to SAMHSA's Mental Health Services Locator (www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases/) or Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator (<http://dast3.samhsa.gov/>).

Assessing Suicide Risk: Initial Tips for Counselors



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
www.samhsa.gov

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Resources

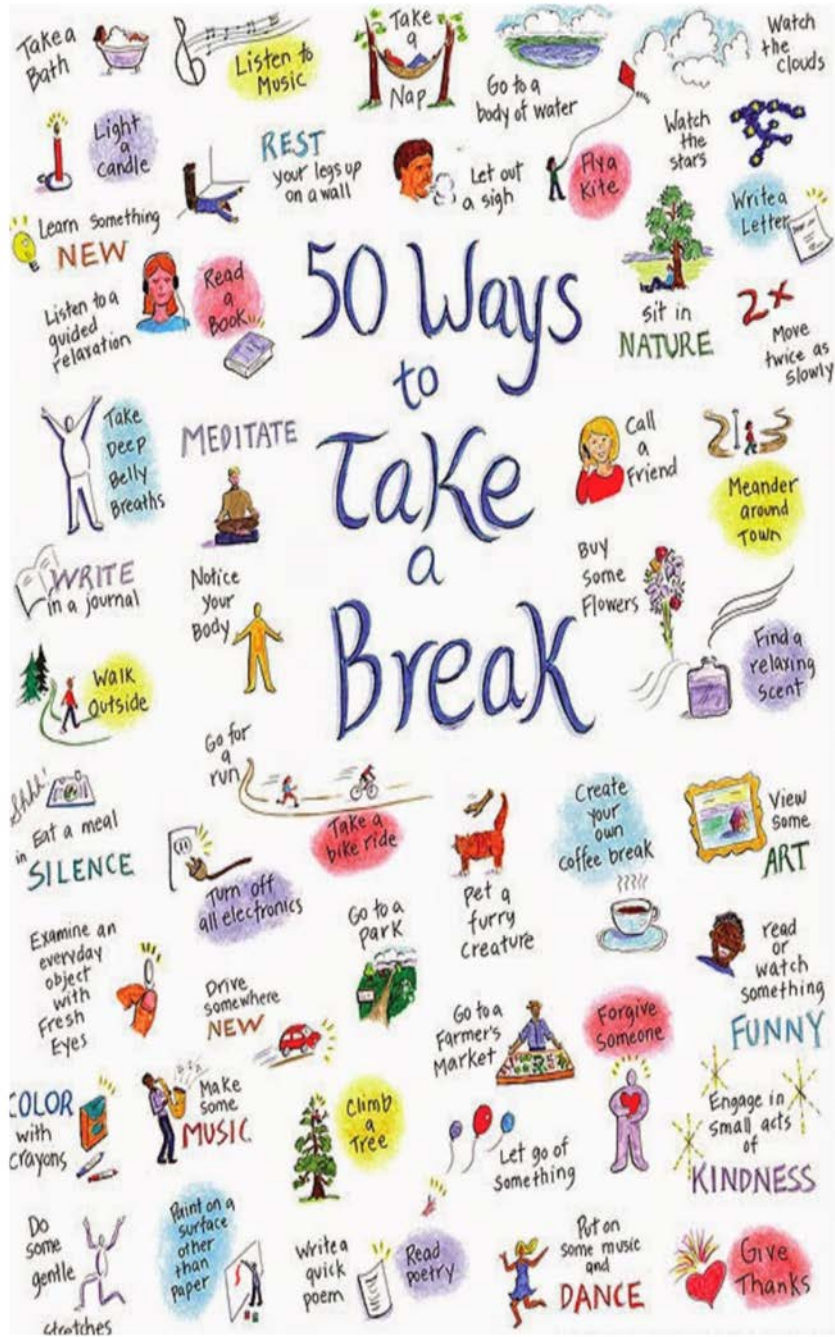
Orange County Crisis Prevention Hotline 1-877-7CRISIS or 1-877-727-4747

- 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to any Orange County resident, who is or knows of someone experiencing a crisis or suicidal thoughts and would like to receive immediate, confidential, and culturally and linguistically appropriate over-the-phone assistance either for themselves or someone they know.
- The Crisis Prevention Hotline is currently operational. Callers will receive crisis services from well-trained counselors

Resources

- Orange County Behavioral Health Referrals
[855-OC-LINKS \(855-625-4657\)](tel:855-OC-LINKS)
- Orange County 211 Infolink
www.infolinkoc.org
- Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program
www.yellowribbon.org
- American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org
- National Association of School Psychologists
www.nasponline.org
- Signs of Suicide SOS
www.mentalhealthscreening.org
- Centers for Disease Control
www.cdc.gov





“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.” - Jack Kornfield



Interventions for ALL

Taking Care of Yourself and Others

- Keep to a Routine & Structure your time
- Consider altering your work schedule to decrease demands
- “Give yourself some slack”
- Seek social support
- Get plenty of rest
- Relaxation/Meditation
- Balanced diet and sleep cycle
- Hot bath
- Write or listen to music
- Exercise such as jogging, walking
- Do relaxation exercises such as meditation, breathing



Thank you for your time!!

If you have any questions or concerns,
please do not hesitate to contact us:

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Crisis Response Network

Orange County Department of Education

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“TOO OFTEN WE
UNDERESTIMATE THE
POWER OF A TOUCH, A
SMILE, A KIND WORD, A
LISTENING EAR, AN
HONEST COMPLIMENT,
OR THE SMALLEST ACT OF
CARING, ALL OF WHICH
HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO
TURN A LIFE AROUND.”
— LEO BUSCAGLIA

