



Oakland County
Youth Suicide Prevention

TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS

WHY DO I NEED TO WATCH FOR SUICIDE?



- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for those ages 10 to 24 in the U.S.
- For each suicide death, family and close friends are at a higher risk for suicide themselves.
- If you are concerned, talk to your child immediately.
- Knowing the risk factors and warning signs helps you help your child with concerns about himself or another student.
- Asking directly about suicide tells your child it's ok to talk about it with you.
- Take all suicidal thoughts, threats, and behaviors seriously.
- Most suicidal people want to end severe emotional pain.
- Emotional pain makes it hard to think clearly, consider options, or remember reasons for living.



Useful Websites:

Is your home suicide proof?

suicideproof.org

Oakland County Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force

oakgov.com/health/partnerships/Pages/Youth-Suicide-Prevention-.aspx

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

sprc.org

WHY DO I NEED TO WATCH FOR SUICIDE?

RISK FACTORS

Prior suicide attempt

- This is the strongest predictor of future attempts.

Substance use

- Using alcohol and other drugs can be an attempt to self-medicate to ease the pain related to depression, traumatic events, or other issues.
- 96% of drug-related suicide attempts involved prescription drugs.

Mental illness

- 1 in 5 teens will have depression at some point.
- Many teens with depression are undiagnosed.
- Childhood depression often continues into adulthood, especially if left untreated.

Interpersonal conflict

Conflicts are a basic part of everyday life. For youth, some conflicts can seem impossible to deal with. As an adult, listening with empathy and providing support is key.



MANY TEENS SAY THEIR PARENTS ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE DANGERS OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE WITH THEM.



- **Bullying:** In-person or cyberbullying.
- **Trauma:** Examples may include injury, assault, legal trouble, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- **Relationship breakups:** Impulsivity combined with potential inability to think through consequences before acting can increase risk for suicide following a breakup.
- **Sexing:** Teach your children to never take images they don't want family or future employers to see. Forwarding a sexual picture of a minor is a crime, even for a minor who forwards it.
- **Recent loss:** Examples include moving, changing schools, divorce, or death of a loved one.
- **Questioning sexual orientation:** Sexual minority youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to be depressed and attempt suicide.

WARNING SIGNS

Call 911 if:

- A suicide attempt has been made.
- A weapon is present during a suicide crisis.
- The person is out of control or if your safety is threatened.

Take immediate action and call 800.231.1127 (Common Ground) if someone:

- Makes a serious threat to kill themselves such as:
“I wish I were dead.”
“If... doesn't happen, I'll kill myself.”
“What's the point of living?”
- Looks for a way to carry out a suicide plan.
- Talks about death or suicide in text messages, social media sites, or in poems/music.
- Gives away their possessions.



SUICIDAL thoughts/actions are signs of **EXTREME DISTRESS**, NOT harmless bids for attention.

Call 800.231.1127 if someone exhibits uncharacteristic behavior:

- Hopelessness
- Rage, anger, or seeking revenge
- Reckless or risky behavior
- Expressions of feeling trapped, like there's no way out
- Alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Anxiety, agitation, or sleep irregularity
- Dramatic mood changes
- Discussions of no reason for living or no sense of purpose
- Depression



9 OUT OF 100 High school students attempted suicide in the past 12 months

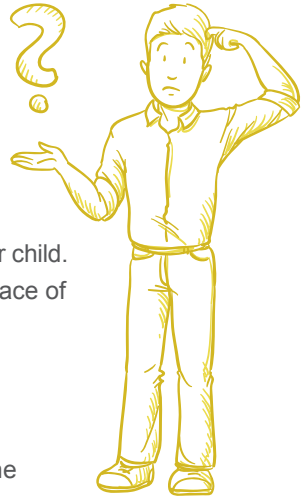


2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Michigan High School Survey

PREVENTION

What you can do right now:

- Know suicide risk factors and warning signs.
- Share this booklet with your child.
- Have a discussion with your child about what to do if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.
- Teach skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- Maintain a supportive and involved relationship with your child.
- Encourage involvement in sports, activities at school/place of worship, or volunteering.
- Help your teen develop strong communication skills.
- Get medical care for depression and substance use.
- Don't leave a depressed or suicidal teen home alone.
- Most suicides occur in the early afternoon/evening in the teen's home.



3 in 5

teens say prescription painkillers or stimulants are EASY to get from their parents' medicine cabinets.

Remove these items or secure in your room:

Prescription and over-the-counter medications

- Keep medications, including vitamins with iron, where your kids or their friends cannot access.
- Don't keep lethal doses of medication on hand. A pharmacist can advise you on safe quantities.
- Safely discard unused medications. Visit oakgov.com/sheriff/Pages/community_services.operation_medicine_cabinet.aspx for drop-off locations.

Alcohol and drugs

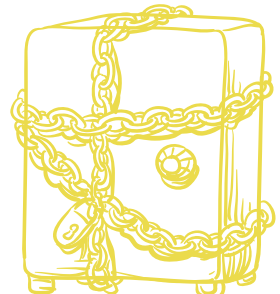
- Talk to your kids about substance use as a major risk factor for suicide.
- If your teen has a pattern of substance use, seek treatment services. Substance use could be an attempt to self-medicate a mental illness.
- Substance use makes youth more likely to choose lethal means, such as guns. Remove firearms from your home.

Poisons

- Lock up potentially harmful common household products, including household cleaners, products containing alcohol (such as mouthwash, hand sanitizer, etc.), and cosmetics (such as nail polish remover, perfume, etc.).

Guns

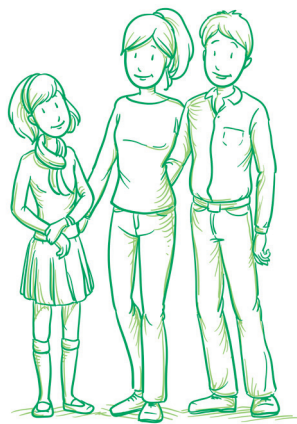
- Firearms are responsible for half of all suicide deaths. Remove firearms from home if possible. Securely lock firearms and ammunition separately.



TALKING TO YOUR KIDS & RESOURCES

How to start a conversation after a relationship breakup:

- “I am so sorry you are going through this.”
- “What did you notice about yourself in the relationship?”
- “What is positive? What would you like to change?”
- “Were there patterns or issues that brought you into this relationship or caused it to end?”
- “What are your goals in life?”
- “Who are you on your own and how do you want to live your life?”
- “What support do you need at this time?”



How to start a conversation about suicide:

- “I have been feeling concerned about you lately.”
- “Sometimes when people act this way, they’re thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?”
- “Lately, I’ve noticed some differences in you. How are you doing?”
- “What happened? It might help to talk about it.”

Questions you can ask:

- “When did you begin feeling like this?”
- “Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?”
- “How can I support you right now?”
- “Could you tell me more about that?”



What to say that can help:

- “You are not alone – I’m here for you.”
- “I may not understand exactly how you feel, but I love you and want to help.”
- “I think you feel there is no way out. Let’s talk about some options.”

Common Ground

Resource & Crisis Helpline: 800-231-1127 (24/7)

Text: “Hello” to 800-231-1127*

Crisis Chat: commongroundhelps.org/*

Suicide Prevention Website: commongroundhelps.org/resources/suicide-prevention/

*See website for most up-to-date hours

Community Network Services (for ages 18+)

248-745-4900 • cnsmi.org

Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities

248.221.7101 • achcmi.org

Easterseals Michigan

National: 800-75-SEALS • Local: 248-475-6400 • essmichigan.org

Jewish Family Service

248-592-2313 • jfsdetroit.org

Oakland Community Health Network

800-341-2003 • occmha.org

Oakland County Health Division Nurse on Call

800-848-5533 • noc@oakgov.com

Oakland Family Services

248-858-7766 • oaklandfamilyservices.org

OK2SAY

michigan.gov/ok2say • Text 652729 (OK2SAY)

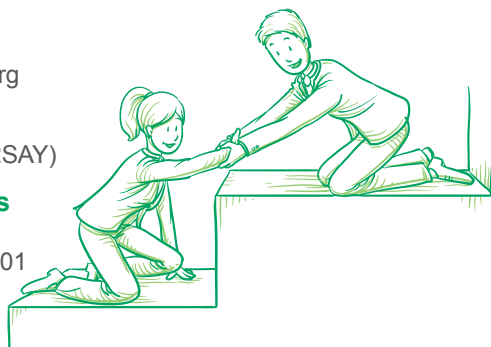
Training and Treatment Innovations

(for ages 18+)

Oxford: 248-969-9932 • Troy: 248-524-8801
ttiinc.org

The Trevor Project Lifeline

866-488-7386 • thetrevorproject.org



MYTH

Talking about suicide will cause youth to attempt.

FACT

Talking about suicide reduces the risk. Be direct in a caring, non-confrontational way.

MYTH

A youth threatening suicide is not serious about it.

FACT


It's better to overestimate the risk of suicide and intervene than to ignore or minimize behaviors.

MYTH

Suicide cannot be prevented because a suicidal youth will find a way to do it.

FACT

Most suicidal youth do not want to die, they want their pain to end. Recognizing warning signs is key.

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