



KNOW More™

Know More About
TEEN SUICIDE



KNOW More™

When a friend or loved one attempts suicide,
the first question everyone asks is

"WHY?"



Most teens who have attempted suicide say they did it because they were trying to escape from a seemingly impossible situation or find relief from really bad thoughts or feelings. They did not want to die as much as they desperately wanted to escape. Dying seemed to be the only way out. But it's not.

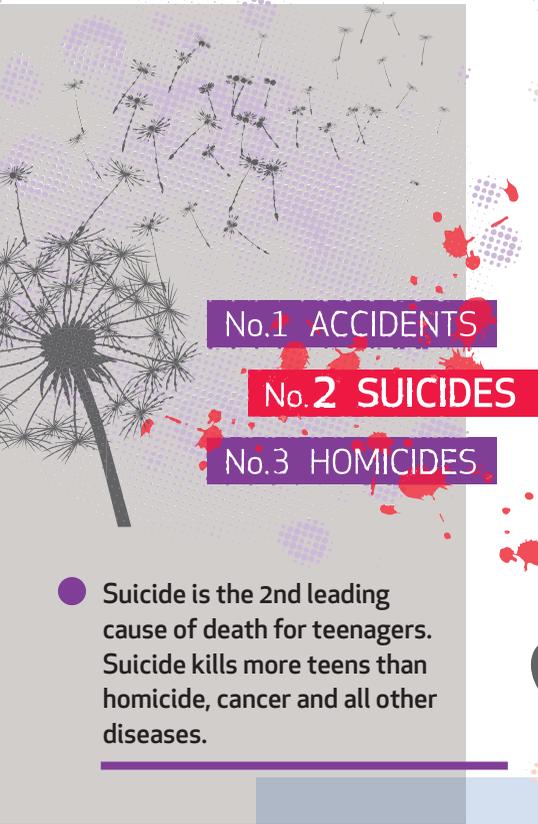
Every teenager sometimes feels overwhelmed by difficult situations. Most kids can get through tough times, putting problems in perspective and finding ways to move ahead.

- **SO WHY**, in similar situations, *does one teen choose suicide when another does not?*
- **WHAT** makes some young people *better able to handle problems* than others?
- **WHAT** makes a teenager *unable to see any other way out* of a really bad situation but suicide?
- **WHAT CAN YOU DO** if *you or someone close to you is thinking about suicide?*

Learn the facts about **TEEN SUICIDE** so you can make wise decisions based on what you KNOW!

TEEN SUICIDE

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

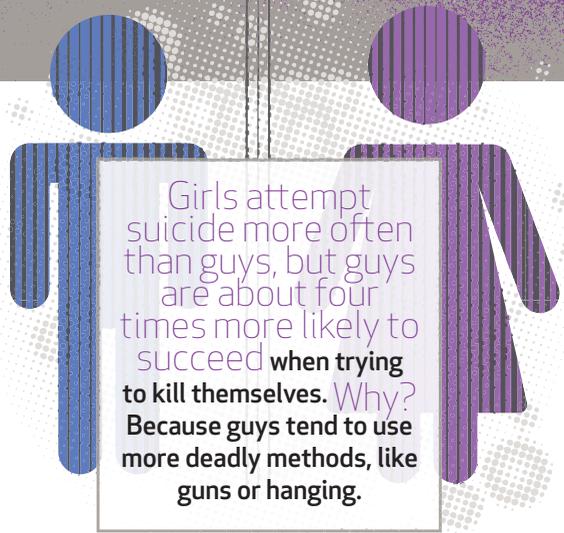


No.1 ACCIDENTS

No.2 SUICIDES

No.3 HOMICIDES

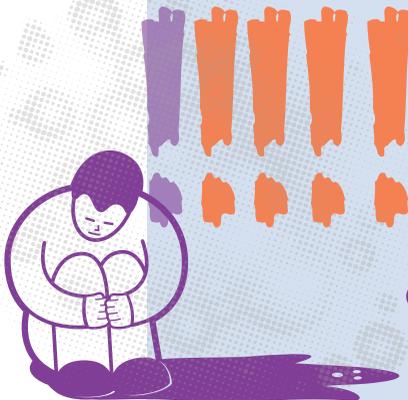
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for teenagers. Suicide kills more teens than homicide, cancer and all other diseases.



Girls attempt suicide more often than guys, but guys are about four times more likely to succeed when trying to kill themselves. **Why?** Because guys tend to use more deadly methods, like guns or hanging.



● 1 in 5 teenagers in the U.S. seriously considers suicide at some time.



● 4 of 5 teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.

STATISTICS



- There is an average of 5,400 suicide attempts by young people in grades 7-12 every day in the U.S.



- Approximately 1,700 teenagers die by suicide every year.



- Nearly 60% of all suicides in the U.S. are committed with a gun.

WHY SUICIDE?

Teens who try to end their lives may be attempting to escape feelings of rejection, hurt, or loss. Others might feel angry, ashamed, or guilty about something. Some people may be worried about disappointing friends or family members. Yet others may feel unwanted, unloved, victimized, or a burden to others.

BEING A TEENAGER IS NOT EASY.

- You may feel pressure to get top grades so you can get into the best colleges.
- Maybe you struggle with learning or attention problems that make doing well in school seem impossible.
- Perhaps you worry about relationships, wondering if your feelings and attractions are normal or if you will ever be loved and accepted.
- You or one of your friends may struggle with body image or eating disorders.
- You or one of your friends may live in a violent or abusive home.

Not only can problems like these be difficult and draining, but they can also lead to depression if they go on for too long without relief or support.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Most teenagers who attempt suicide suffer from depression.

Everyone feels sad, depressed, or angry sometimes – especially when dealing with the pressures of school, friends, and family. But some people may feel sadness or hopelessness that just won't go away, with even small problems seeming like too much to handle. Depression can affect many areas of your life and outlook. A teen who has very intense feelings of depression, emotional pain, or irritability may begin to think about suicide.

TEENS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO DEPRESSION.

That's because changing hormones and sleep patterns affect your moods.

When things are so bad that suicide feels like the only option – it is a sign that depression, discouragement, and despair are strong. These feelings, especially in difficult circumstances, can make it seem like there is no way out. Feeling depressed and trapped can make you feel like you have no other option when you really do have other choices.



The good news is that depression can be treated.

When a teenager gets proper therapy or treatment, depression lifts and thinking becomes clearer.

Most teens get better with the right help.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Teens who use alcohol and drugs are at a higher risk for depression and suicidal thinking. This is especially true for some teens who already have a tendency for depression because of their biology, family history, or other life stressors.

Many teens who are depressed turn to alcohol or drugs as an escape. Not only can these substances intensify depression in the long run, but they can also alter a teenager's judgment. Substance abuse interferes with a teen's ability to assess risk, make good choices, and think of solutions to problems. Many suicide attempts occur when someone is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.



This doesn't mean that everyone who is depressed or who has an alcohol or drug problem will try to kill himself or herself. But these conditions — especially both together — increase a person's risk for suicide.

COPING WITH PROBLEMS

How do teens cope with problems and difficult situations without becoming depressed? One way is to stay connected to **family, friends, school, faith, and other support networks**.

Teenagers like you are better able to deal with tough times when you have **AT LEAST ONE** person who believes in you – someone who wants you to be your best, someone you trust, and someone you feel safe talking to about your problems.

Here are some steps that might help if you or a friend is feeling overwhelmed by life:



TELL SOMEONE you trust what is going on.



BE AROUND PEOPLE who are caring and positive.



ASK SOMEONE TO HELP you figure out what to do about your problem.



FIND AND JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP for people who are going through similar problems. Check online to find a support group or ask a school counselor or youth leader.



WORK WITH A THERAPIST OR A COUNSELOR if problems are getting you down, if you don't have a strong support system, or if you feel you can't cope.



WARNING SIGNS

How do you know if a friend or family member is thinking about or even planning a suicide attempt?

These unusual behaviors may be warning signs that someone needs immediate help:

HE TALKS ABOUT

 dying, disappearing, jumping, shooting himself, or harming himself in some way.

SHE HAS SUFFERED A RECENT

 **LOSS**— death of a family member or close friend, parents' divorce or separation, or broken relationships

SHE BEGINS GIVING AWAY

 **HER POSSESSIONS** and tells you where to find her journal if anything happens to her.

HE HAS LOST INTEREST

 in friends and activities he used to enjoy.

HE BEGINS DRINKING

 **EXCESSIVELY**, using drugs, cutting, fighting, or doing other things to hurt himself or others.

HER PERSONALITY CHANGES

 **DRAMATICALLY**. She has become sad, withdrawn, irritable, anxious, tired, or apathetic.



4 out of 5 teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.

HE CAN'T CONCENTRATE

! at school or work or even doing the most routine tasks.

SHE HAS NO APPETITE

! and has lost weight or is overeating.

SHE HAS NO HOPE

! for the future and believes that nothing will ever change or get better.

HE HAS INSOMNIA OR SLEEPS TOO MUCH.

! He complains of low energy and is always tired.

HE SHARES FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS, SHAME, OVERWHELMING GUILT, OR SELF-HATRED.

! He believes everyone would be better off without him.



MY FRIEND KEEPS TALKING

ABOUT SUICIDE



Some say that people who talk about suicide won't actually go through with it. **That is NOT true. People who talk about suicide are likely to try it.**

Take any suicidal thought or suicide threat seriously. Even if your friend seems to have the "perfect life" on the outside, it is impossible to know what is going on behind closed doors.

Talking with a friend who you think may be considering suicide allows you to get help for him or her. Talking with you may help him or her to feel less alone and more understood. It may also provide the chance for him or her to consider other solutions.

Sometimes, friends tell us things in confidence and make us promise not to tell anyone else. Keeping the secret of suicide doesn't help anyone; it can actually make things worse. So if someone tells you something that worries you or shares thoughts of suicide, the most important thing to do is:

GO IMMEDIATELY AND TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST...

a parent or relative, a teacher or coach, a youth leader or pastor.

Your friend needs help and support that only a trained counselor or therapist can provide.

If you don't know who to talk to or ask for help, call this hotline number **1-800-273-8255** or **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)** and ask them to help you figure out what to do.





I THINK THAT SUICIDE IS MY ONLY OPTION. **WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If you have been thinking about suicide, **GET HELP NOW.**
TALK WITH AN ADULT YOU TRUST IMMEDIATELY.

Talk with someone with whom you feel safe – a parent, relative, friend, teacher, coach, youth leader, pastor, etc. Tell him or her, *“I’ve been having a tough time lately and I’ve been thinking about suicide. I need your help. Can you help me find a counselor to talk to about my problem and my feelings?”* Let them help you find the support you need.

If you don’t know who to talk to or ask for help, call this hotline number **1-800-273-8255** or **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)** and ask them to help you figure out what to do. These toll free lines are staffed by trained professionals who can help you without knowing your name or seeing your face. All calls are confidential.

If you feel you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself, call 911 or have someone take you to the emergency room at your local hospital.



MY BUDDY JUST COMMITTED SUICIDE...

If someone you know – a family member, friend, classmate, teacher – has attempted or died by suicide, you may be overwhelmed by emotions. You may feel guilty, thinking you could have stopped him or her if you had paid closer attention. You might be angry at the person for doing something so selfish or for leaving you alone. You may feel nothing. You may not know how to express what you are feeling. Talk about your feelings with your parents or other trusted adults when you are ready.

THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO FEEL. If someone has attempted suicide and survived, you might be afraid or uncomfortable talking with him or her about it. Don't be. **Reach out to your friend.** This is a time when he or she needs to feel connected to others.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ...

ASK FRIENDS what they are feeling if they begin talking about suicide or begin showing other warning signs. Don't wait to see if they feel better. When you ask, you show them that you care and are very concerned.

DON'T BE AFRAID that, if you ask, you will plant the idea of suicide. It is always a good thing to ask, even if it is difficult. You can say something like, "You have been talking a lot about wanting to die. Have you been thinking about trying to kill yourself?"

LISTEN TO YOUR FRIEND without judging. Let him or her know that you are there and that you care. If you are afraid that your friend is in immediate danger, stay close. Make sure he or she is not left alone.

TELL A RESPONSIBLE ADULT immediately, even if you are afraid that you are betraying your friend. Share your concerns as soon as possible. It may be tempting to try to help your friend on your own, but it is always safer to get help.

Now that you **KNOW MORE**,
you can find the courage to act
immediately if you or someone close
to you is considering suicide.

NEED HELP NOW?

Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-TALK**
or visit their website: suicidepreventionlifeline.org

To locate a Suicide Prevention Hotline number for your city or
area, go to **Suicide.org** and click on the Louisiana Suicide Hotlines
link (suicide.org/hotlines/louisiana-suicide-hotlines.htm)

RESOURCES

Parts of this booklet were derived from these sources:

- **About Teen Suicide** | kidshealth.org
- **Teen Suicide is Preventable** | **American Psychological Association** | apa.org
- **Teen Suicide** | teensuicide.us
- **Facts For Families: Teen Suicide #10** | **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**
- **FACTS - Warning Signs of Suicide** | **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide** | sptsusa.org/teens
- **When a Friend is Talking About Suicide** | **Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide** | sptsusa.org/teens
- **Youth Suicide Statistics** | jasonfoundation.org
- **How to Tell If A Friend Is Struggling** | Ulifeline.org



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