

TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION

TEEN SUICIDE
SHOULDN'T
BE A SECRET

SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE



0800 567 567

TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION

Being a teenager:

often means having lots of **emotional** ups and downs. School, parents, friends, relationships can be confusing and frustrating - things can be great one minute and horrible the next. Many people believe that sadness is just a normal part of growing up, but teens who feel really down and unhappy for two weeks or more at a time may have Depression.

Many teens get Depression, if you or a friend feels down, you are not alone. Depression is a "whole-body" illness that involves your body, mood and thoughts. It affects the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things.

Depression is not a sign of weakness, it can't be wished away, and people with Depression cannot just pull themselves together. The good news is people, who suffer from Depression can get better with the correct treatment so there is no need to feel this way. Take a look at the list and mark the things that describe your thoughts, feelings, or actions in the last two weeks.

If you have four or more of these feelings, and it lasted longer than two weeks?



- I feel guilty; I have no confidence?
- I feel I am a failure or have let my family down?
- I have lost interest in my hobbies. Most of the time I would rather be alone?
- I often feel restless or tired?
- I have trouble concentrating on things like homework or watching TV?
- I have trouble sleeping or I sleep too much?
- My appetite has increased or decreased?
- I have unrealistic ideas about the great things that I am going to do?
- My thoughts race. I can't slow my mind down?
- I often think about death. Thoughts about suicide pop into my mind?
- I use drugs and/or alcohol on a regular basis?

You may have Depression

What causes Suicide?

There are many reasons why a teen may feel like they want to end their life.

- 1. Depression** - is the leading cause of suicide. Depression makes people feel hopeless, helpless and often they see no reason
- 2. Alcohol and Drug Use** - is often connected to suicide. Alcohol & drugs can actually add to Depression, and make it worse in depressed people. They also affect your judgement, and lessen self-control.
- 3. Bullying** - is a common problem in schools and many children & teens who are bullied feel worthless and hopeless. Being bullied can make people feel depressed and sadly many teens who are targets of physical or cyber bullying attempt suicide or become very depressed.
- 4. Self-harm** - many people believe that teens who hurt or injure themselves are suicidal. This isn't always true. People hurt themselves as a way to cope with problems. This isn't a healthy way and there is help!

How to talk to someone who may be feeling or thinking about Suicide



- Stay connected to the story being shared
- Help them stay calm by speaking softly and taking deep breaths together
- Make sure that you are in a place to have a deeper conversation
- "I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately, are you okay? Let's talk about it?"
- Give them time to share at their own pace without passing judgment
- Check in often. If struggling persists find help together and reach out to us
- Remember, their feelings matter - and they feel very real and scared
- Listen, ask questions and try to understand what they are dealing with
- Ask them directly if they have any thoughts or plans of suicide

THERE IS HOPE

Warning Signs of Suicide...

- **Suicide Myth:** All suicide threats should be taken seriously. 75% of people who take their own lives give some warning.
- **Talking or joking about Suicide:** your friend may talk about dying, threaten to kill themselves, or say things like "Nothing matters", or "I want to die" or "I won't be around much longer."
- **Depression:** your friend's behaviour changes and they will withdraw from friends and family.
- **Preparing for death:** many teens who are planning suicide will give favourite things away, or even say goodbye.
- **Changes in personality:** someone who is usually sociable, may not want to go out, may become negative, aggressive or irritable, and lose their friend.
- **Drop in appearance and hygiene:** if your friend stops caring what they look like, getting dressed or even bathing or washing.
- **Risk-taking behaviour:** people who are feeling suicidal do risky, dangerous things like drink and drive, have unprotected sex, or take drugs.
- **Excessive feelings of guilt, self-blame, failure:** if someone is depressed, they often feel guilty and blame themselves, and it can be very difficult to talk to them.
- **Suddenly feel better:** your friend, who has been very depressed and hasn't been for treatment, is suddenly "back to normal" this could be dangerous. It may mean they have set a date for their Suicide and know the pain will soon end.
- **Writing poems, essays about death, SMSs or painting images of death:** this is a cry for help, listen to it, and get help.

Knowing the warning signs of suicide can save a life.



Getting Help:

Depression is common and it's also very treatable. Treatment for Depression can include talk therapy medication, or a combination of both. Talk therapy with a psychologist, social worker or counsellor can help you understand more about why you feel depressed, and ways to cope. Just talking about how you feel can make you feel better.

Medication is sometimes prescribed by a doctor to help you feel better. It can take a few weeks before you feel the medication working. Every person's brain is different so what works well for one person might not be good for another. We can all benefit from mood boosting activities like exercise, dance, music, writing in a diary, even hanging out with friends.

Ways to Help You Cope:

Depression can make you feel exhausted, worthless, helpless, and hopeless. Remember this is part of the Depression & will go away when you get treatment:

1. Understand what Depression is so you know what you are dealing with
2. Do things to keep your mind busy and things that make you feel better, like exercise, watching a movie or a sports match, or being with friends
3. Set realistic goals and take a reasonable amount of responsibility
4. Break large tasks into small ones, and do what you can Be realistic and take one step at a time
5. Confide in someone you trust, it is better than being alone and keeping your thoughts to yourself
6. Keep a diary or journal. It is a great way to get your feelings and thoughts out
7. Let your family and friends help you

MY SAFETY PLAN

When thoughts of Suicide are overwhelming, staying safe takes a great deal of strength. A safety plan is something to use during those crisis times. It's not a cure to the issues and feelings you are suffering, but it will give you the time to seek professional help. Keep it near you to keep you safe!

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

If things get too much and you can't distract yourself with the self-help measures, here is a list of your people that you know who will be there for you when you need them most:

Name _____ Contact number _____

Name _____ Contact number _____

Name _____ Contact number _____

Activities to help me feel better:

My go-to coping hobbies are (e.g. playing sport, art, reading a book, taking a walk, listening to music, etc.)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

Places I feel most safe:

List the places you feel safe and can get help: e.g. your best friends home or your school counsellors office.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

☎ 0800 567 567

REACH OUT TO US FOR SUPPORT

 www.sadag.org  (8am – 5pm) 076 882 2775