

## Suicide

Teenagers and older adults are at a higher risk of suicide. Although the highest suicide rates of any age group are among those 65 years old and older, Teenage Suicide is a serious and growing problem. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24 year olds, after accidents and homicide. It is thought that at least 25 attempts are made for every completed teen suicide.

Suicide rates differ between boys and girls, with girls thinking about and attempting suicide about twice as often. Girls tend to attempt suicide by overdosing on drugs or cutting themselves. Yet boys die by suicide about four times as often girls, possibly because they tend to use more lethal methods, such as firearms, hanging, or jumping from heights.

The teenage years are a time of tremendous possibility but can also be emotionally turbulent and stressful. Teenagers face pressures to succeed and fit in. They may struggle with self-esteem issues, self-doubt, and feelings of alienation. For some, this leads to suicide. Depression is also a major risk factor. It is important to watch for signs of depression or self-destructive behavior and obtain professional help.

### **Recognizing Suicidal Behavior**

The following signs may mean someone is at risk for suicide. The risk of suicide is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. If you know someone exhibiting any of these signs, seek help as soon as possible.

Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself

Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live

Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain

Talking about being a burden to others

Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun

Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs

Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly

Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge

Displaying extreme mood swings

Changes in eating and sleeping habits

Withdrawing from friends, family, and regular activities

Unusual neglect of personal appearance

Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating, or a decline in the quality of schoolwork

Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.

Not tolerating praise or rewards

It is a common myth that people who talk of suicide don't commit it! Take any suicidal talk or behavior seriously.