

A Parent's Guide to Youth Suicide

Facts:

- Suicide ranks as the 3rd leading cause of death for young people ages 15-19
- Most adolescent suicides occur in the afternoon in the teen's home
- The access and availability of firearms is a significant factor in the increase of adolescent suicide
- Firearms are the most commonly used suicide method among adolescents
- Every 2 hours and 2.5 minutes a person under the age of 25 completes a suicide

Warning Signs:

- A prior suicide attempt is an important risk factor for an eventual completion
- Any deliberate, harmful behaviors (cutting, self mutilation) should be considered serious. **Seek help immediately**
- Most adolescent suicides are precipitated by interpersonal conflicts
- Depression, lack of interest in activities
- Psychiatric, behavior or conduct disorder
- Run away from home
- Giving away prized possessions
- Exposure to a peer's suicidality
- Severe stress due to unplanned pregnancy, sexual orientation, significant loss
- Loss of family stability; family conflict; divorce or separation
- Expressing suicidal thoughts through communication, writing, lyrics
- Impulsive or aggressive behavior
- Frequent expressions of uncontrollable rage

What resources are available to prevent and/or treat suicidal behaviors?

- Contact your child's guidance counselor or local school district's LSSP School Psychologist.
- Contact your local MHMR facility or State Hospital.
- National Hopeline Network 1-8000-SUICIDE provides access to trained telephone counselors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- American Association of Suicidolgy at www.suicidology.org
- www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention/

Reference:

Adolescent Suicide. (n.d.) Retrieved on July 18, 2003 from American Association of Suicidology at www.suicidology.org