

## Division of Student Services

### Suicide Prevention: Facts at a Glance A Resource For Student Services Professionals

#### Statistics:

Source [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

- In 2014, 42,773 Americans died by suicide.
- The overall suicide rate increased by 24% from 1999-2014.
- Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death in the United States for ages 10-24.
- Firearms account for almost 50% of all suicides.
- For every suicide there are 25 suicide attempts.
- Among students in grades 9-12: 17% seriously considered attempting suicide, and 8% attempted suicide during the previous 12 months (2013).
- Four out of five teens who attempt suicide have given clear warning signs.
- Each day in our nation there are an average of over 5,400 suicide attempts for youth in grades 7-12.

#### Risk Factors

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Previous suicide attempt or gesture
- Feelings of hopelessness or isolation
- Psychopathology (depressive disorders/mood disorders)
- Parental psychopathology
- Substance abuse disorder
- Family history of suicidal behavior
- Life stressors such as interpersonal losses (relationship, social, work) and legal or disciplinary problems
- Access to firearms
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Conduct disorders or disruptive behaviors
- Sexual orientation (homosexual, bisexual, and trans-gendered youth)
- Juvenile delinquency
- School and/or work problems
- Contagion or imitation (exposure to media accounts of suicidal behavior and exposure to suicidal behavior in friends or acquaintances)
- Chronic physical illness
- Living alone and/or runaways
- Aggressive-impulsive behaviors

#### Protective Factors

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Family cohesion (family with mutual involvement, shared interests, and emotional support)
- Good coping skills
- Academic achievement
- Perceived connectedness to the school
- Good relationships with other school youth
- Lack of access to means for suicidal behavior
- Help-seeking behavior/advice seeking
- Impulse control
- Problem solving/conflict resolution abilities
- Social integration/opportunities to participate
- Sense of worth/confidence
- Stable environment
- Access to and care for mental/physical/substance disorders
- Responsibilities for others/pets
- Religiosity

#### Early Warning Signs

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Preoccupation with death
- Marked personality change and serious mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulties in school (decline in quality of work)
- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomach aches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Persistent boredom
- Loss of interest in things one cares about

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### Suicide Prevention: Facts at a Glance (continued) A Resource For Student Services Professionals

#### Late Warning Signs

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Actually talking about suicide or a plan
- Exhibiting impulsivity such as violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away
- Refusing help, feeling “beyond help”
- Complaining of being a bad person or feeling “rotten inside”
- Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness
- Not tolerating praise or rewards
- Giving verbal hints with statements such as: “I won’t be a problem for you much longer,” “Nothing matters,” “It’s no use,” and “I won’t see you again”
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression-this may mean that the student has already made the decision to escape all problems by ending his/her life
- Giving away favorite possessions
- Making a last will and testament
- Saying other things like: “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I were dead,” or “I shouldn’t have been born.”

#### What to Do

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3c.pdf>

- Always ensure a student’s safety
- Send someone for help
- Listen
- Be Direct
- Remain calm
- Be empathetic
- Always take the student seriously
- Know what resources are available in your school
- Be honest
- Know your limits
- Make sure that at each stage of the intervention the student knows what is going on

#### What Not to Do

Source <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3c.pdf>

- Don’t be judgmental
- Don’t preach to the student
- Never leave the student alone or send the student away as this may just reinforce feelings of isolation and hopelessness
- Don’t worry about silence during discussion
- Don’t under-react or minimize even if a student is seeking attention, you should act as the benefits could certainly outweigh the costs
- If a student is threatening suicide and does have a weapon, never try to physically take the weapon from the student