



## PROTECT THEIR POTENTIAL: TOOLS TO HELP PREVENT SUICIDE

# Facts About Suicide in Youth

### Did you know...

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 10-34.
- For every death by suicide, there are over 25 suicide attempts.
- Suicide rates in young people are at the highest levels since 2000, and have increased faster for Black children than in any other racial or ethnic group during that time.
- Rates are even higher in LGBTQIA+ youth of color.
- The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a rapid increase in mental health issues like depression and anxiety in children and teens.

### How you can help:

- Know the warning signs
- Reach out to someone who is struggling
- Ask for help from a health care provider or call 988

**Call or text 988 or talk to someone if you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide.**

Download our free toolkit by scanning the QR code or at [childrensmercy.org/suicideprevention](https://childrensmercy.org/suicideprevention).



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## Warning Signs of Suicide

80% of teens who die by suicide show warning signs. Talking to someone about suicide will not make them more likely to act—in fact, research shows that providing support and talking about suicide is helpful to people in crisis.

Watch for these signs and get help from a medical or mental health professional if you have concerns:

- Withdrawal from friends, family and community.
- Changes to appetite/eating.
- Cutting back on activities and interests.
- Increased drug or alcohol use.
- Reckless behavior.
- Difficulty at school, such as failing grades or bullying.
- Conflict with friends/parents.
- Making comments about being hopeless, helpless, or worthless.



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# How to Help with Suicidal Thoughts

Talking with someone who is struggling can be uncomfortable, but you could be the one who saves a life.

### ASK

Ask directly if the person is thinking about dying or hurting themselves. Even though it's difficult, starting the conversation will not make them more likely to attempt suicide and will let them know they can talk to you.

### LISTEN

Try to listen calmly and without judgment so the person knows that you are a safe space for them to be honest about their struggles.

### STAY

If you're concerned about their safety, do not leave them alone. If you can't stay, you can ask another caring person to help, or take them to an emergency department.

### SECURE

Remove any nearby objects that could be used in a suicide attempt. Guns, sharp objects, medications or anything else that could cause harm should be locked up or removed from the area.



### CALL

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 988, is available 24/7 by phone, text or chat. **Call 911 if the person is in immediate danger.**

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# Suicide and Its Survivors

Every death by suicide affects between 5 and 80 individuals. Many amazing people at one time faced tremendous struggles, and yet they got help and went on to thrive. Recovery is possible.

Treatments such as cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness and medication can help people who are struggling with depression get through difficult times.

If you or someone you love have recently been to the hospital or seen a health care provider about your mental health, ask a friend or family member to help you stick to your follow-up care plan. **There is always someone who cares about you – please stay.**

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# Where to Turn for Help

You are not alone – there is always someone who cares about you. If talking to a parent is difficult, you can talk to:

- A teacher, coach or school counselor.
- A doctor, nurse, therapist or other health care professional.
- A community or faith leader.
- A family member, like a grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin or close family friend.
- A trusted friend.

Someone who cares about you may notice that you seem down or not like yourself. Be honest with them if they ask you how you're doing or if you've ever had thoughts about suicide. You can say "I don't feel safe right now," or "I'm not okay – I think I need some help."

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