



# PARENT

# HEALTH BULLETIN



## SEPTEMBER 2018

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<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

### THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

# NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH



**A**s children grow up, it becomes more challenging for parents to know what they are thinking and feeling. Adolescents have normal ups and downs, like feeling sad, depressed or angry sometimes — especially when dealing with the pressures of school, friends and family. However, some youth may feel sadness or hopelessness that will not go away, and even small problems may seem like too much to handle. It is important as a parent to be prepared to help prevent a tragedy from occurring.

### What you can do

If your child seems depressed or anxious, do not wait for them to tell you their problems or concerns.

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# Do not shrug off threats of suicide as teenage drama. Any of these red flags warrant your immediate attention.

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Talk to them. Knock on their door, park yourself on the bed, and say, “You seem sad. Would you like to talk about it? Maybe I can help.”

### Pay attention to behaviors or actions that change, including:

- Major loss (breakup or death)
- Substance use
- Peer or social pressure
- Access to weapons
- Public humiliation
- Severe chronic pain
- Chronic medical condition
- Impulsiveness/aggressiveness
- Family history of suicide
- Exposure to other teen suicides

Do not shrug off threats of suicide as teenage drama. Any of these red flags warrant your immediate attention as a parent, and you should seek professional help right away:

- “Nothing matters.”
- “I wonder how many people would come to my funeral!”
- “Sometimes I wish I could just go to sleep and never wake up.”
- “Everyone would be better off without me.”
- “You won’t have to worry about me much longer.”

### If you believe your child may be thinking about suicide:

- **Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves.** (This will not put the idea into their head or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.) Research shows that people who are having thoughts of suicide feel relief when

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someone asks them in a caring way. Findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce rather than increase suicidal ideation.

- **Be there for them!** Listen without judging and show that you care. Individuals are more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed and more hopeful after speaking to someone who listens without judgment.
- **Stay with the person** (or make sure the person is in a private, secure place with another caring person) until you can get further help.
- **Remove any objects** that could be used in a suicide attempt. If you suspect your child might be suicidal, it is extremely important to keep all firearms, alcohol and medications under lock and key.
- **Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at (800) 273-TALK (8255) and follow their guidance.
- **If self-harm seems imminent, call 911.**

#### REFERENCES:

- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/promote-national-suicide-prevention-month>
- <https://www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention.htm>

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