

Knowing the warning signs of suicide and encouraging someone to get help if they need it can save a life. If you need help, call 1-800-LifeNet and talk to someone. All calls are strictly confidential.



WHO IS AT RISK FOR SUICIDE?

Someone may think of ending their life if one of the following situations happens:

- Major loss such as the death of a family member or friend
- Relationship break-up
- Family problems
- Sexual, physical or mental abuse
- Drug or alcohol problems
- School or work problems
- A mental health problem like Bipolar Disorder or depression
- A feeling of not belonging or of having problems that they can't solve

DEPRESSION makes people focus on their failures and all the negative parts of their lives. If you have severe depression you can't imagine that things will change or turn out well. A teen who is depressed may have thoughts of suicide as a way of escaping or of letting people know how unhappy they feel.

DRUG OR ALCOHOL ABUSE also makes you more at risk for thinking of suicide. Abusing substances can make depression worse. These substances also make it harder to judge risks, make good choices and figure out solutions to

problems. Many suicide attempts happen when a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

BIPOLAR DISORDER also makes people more at risk for suicide. This illness makes a person go through periods of extreme depression and other periods of extreme energy or agitation. These phases affect how they think, feel and the decisions they make.

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY BE THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?

- Talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Trying to get hold of something to kill oneself (like a gun or pills)
- Talking and writing about dying
- Talking about feeling hopeless, no way out, no purpose in life
- Giving away prized possessions
- Acting out of control and doing risky things (when this is unusual for the person)
- Withdrawing from friends and family (when this is unusual for the person)
- Not wanting to take part in favorite activities

- Talking about feeling very down, anxious, having changes in patterns of sleep and eating

Often suicide attempts are done impulsively, without planning. Even if the person wasn't sure they wanted to die, they may end up seriously injured – or worse.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are feeling overwhelmed and thinking about hurting yourself or if you hear a friend say they want to end their life, you must take it seriously.

DON'T KEEP A SECRET.

Never keep suicidal thoughts or plans a secret whether they're your own or a friend's. You must tell an adult who can help.

CALL 1-800-LIFENET.

They will listen without judgment and help sort things out. These calls are confidential.

To learn more about issues facing NYC teens and how to deal with them visit:

www.nyc.gov/teen