

### IF YOU HAVE THOUGHTS ABOUT SUICIDE

Sometimes life's problems seem too big to solve, but ending your life is never a good choice. If you feel like you're in danger of harming yourself and need help, call 1-800-LifeNet and talk to someone. All calls are strictly confidential.

#### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

If you have been feeling helpless, hopeless and have thought about suicide, you must do whatever you can to get help. Even if you have feelings and thoughts about ending your life, you do not have to act on them. Everyone feels really down and hopeless at times. With help, you can get through these times.

**TALK TO SOMEONE.** It's important to speak to someone who can help you think things through. It's okay to talk to a friend but if you are thinking of ending your life, you need to get help from an adult. This can be anyone you feel comfortable with: family member, counselor, youth worker, teacher or clergy. **It may seem really hard to reach out but you can do it.** Once you connect with someone and tell them about your feelings, you will feel less alone.

**WORDS TO SAY.** It may be hard to find the words to describe what you're feeling and thinking. Try saying something like,

"I'm thinking of doing..."  
 "I've been feeling like this for..."  
 "School has been..."

If the person doesn't take you seriously, then find someone else who will listen to you.

**CALL 1-800-LIFENET.** Explain what you are thinking. They will listen without judgment and help you sort things out. These calls are confidential.

**Do things that will distract you from your problems.** Even if nothing seems like fun anymore, try doing some of the stuff that you enjoy or used to enjoy. Watch a movie, call a friend, go for a walk, listen to music. Consider writing in a journal to become more comfortable expressing your thoughts.

**THINK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE GOALS.** Everyone has something they want to achieve. Focus on your short-term goals like downloading a song you like or



long-range goals like finishing school and becoming independent.

**STAY AWAY FROM ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.** You may think that alcohol or drugs will help you cope but, if you're under the influence, you may behave in a way you later regret. Alcohol or drugs may make you feel better for a short time, but afterward things will not have changed and you may even feel worse.

**EAT HEALTHY FOOD AND EXERCISE.** The way you are feeling and thinking is caused not only by social situations and what's going on at home, school and work, but also by biological factors. Eating healthy food and exercising even 30 minutes a few times a week can make a big difference.

#### WHY DO SOME TEENS WANT TO END THEIR LIVES?

Sometimes life's problems seem too big to solve. A person may want to escape from difficult situations or get relief from bad feelings. They may think dying is the only way out. You might feel like that if, for example, someone close to you has died, you have family problems, you have been sexually abused, your

relationship has broken up, you have a drug or alcohol problem or you have a mental health disorder like depression or Bipolar Disorder.

- Unfortunately, some people see suicide as the only way out when everything seems hopeless. Sometimes a person may even plan suicide in advance but then realize that their pain, while great, is temporary and suicide is permanent.
- 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.
- When people deliberately harm themselves by cutting or burning themselves, this is not the same as wanting to end their life. Self-harm or self-injury may be a way of trying to handle very painful feelings. Most people who do these things do not want to die. But still, it's a sign of deep distress. That person needs help too.

To learn more about issues facing NYC teens and how to deal with them visit [www.nyc.gov/teen](http://www.nyc.gov/teen)