

Health News You Can Use - Teen Edition

TEEN SUICIDE

"A lot of kids don't feel like they fit in, or may have pressures that are too much to deal with..." - BQLI summer intern/Suicide researcher

THE FACTS:

- A young person (age 15-24) dies by suicide every 2 hours
- In 2004 suicide was the third leading cause of death in the U.S., accounting for 32,439 deaths
- On average, someone attempts suicide every 40 seconds in the U.S, 88 people die by suicide each day in the US
- According to the "Youth Suicide Fact Sheet", about 8.3% of high school students attempted suicide, while about 19% thought about committing suicide
- Although suicide rates overall have decreased, suicide rates among teens have increased by about 6%

Influences

Depression is one of the most common triggers in suicidal teens. Depression is stress related and one of the most common mental illnesses. Usually, those dealing with depression must navigate the overwhelming feelings of hopelessness and despair. Many teens suffering from depression feel a lack of purpose in their lives and unwanted sadness.

Mood disorders are also relevant to suicide among teens. Conditions include major and minor depressive disorders such as dysthymia, mania, hypomania, bipolar disorder and non-specific mood disorders.

Substance-related disorders include drug abuse and alcohol dependency/abuse also puts teens, already dealing with emotionally stresses, at risk. There are also disruptive disorders such as conduct disorder, attention deficit disorder, oppositional disorder and identity disorder that are huge contributors.

Traumatic Events / Environment

The loss of a friend, loved one or a broken relationship can also trigger depressive behavior. High stress environments where there is constant negativity and or lack of support at school or at home can be major contributors.

What You Should Know

The stresses of everyday life can be hard on us, especially teenagers. There are so many social pressures and expectations that can become overwhelming and even intimidating to young adults. But when a young person considers suicide as an answer to these emotional stresses, they have reached a stage of hopelessness, with no enthusiasm for the future. This sort of depression is common but most importantly treatable. If you or someone you know may be at risk for suicide or depression, it is important to get help immediately. Talk with your primary care physician, a loved one or your pastor. In an instance like this, it is important to be proactive and bring up any mental health concerns as the signs of suicide and depression are quite often missed. In addition, it is important to know what some of the warning signs are. If you find yourself or someone you know: withdrawing from friends or family, increasing alcohol or drug use, having difficulty getting along with others, having dramatic personality changes, experiencing pessimism or agitation, experiencing difficulty sleeping, having changes in grades and or quality of school work—be sure to reach out for help, as these are a few significant warning signs.

Research shows that most cases of suicide originate from behavior that runs in the family. Studies show that some people are genetically predisposed to schizophrenia and alcoholism, which increase the chances of them committing suicide. Many social scientists believe that an individual's immediate environment can also influence suicide rates.

The essential here is to know that there are people who care and people who can help you, sometimes right at home. Whatever your issues are, the key is communication. Understanding that more and more young people are experiencing stress and anxiety in our communities, there is more help than ever for those who may need someone to talk to.

How to Get Help

Option 1: **Call a suicide hotline** at 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) or 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and talk to someone who can help you.

Option 2: **Call 911** or go to the emergency room of the nearest hospital if you are thinking of hurting yourself.

Option 3: **Call a friend** or family member and tell them how you feel. If it is possible, you can ask them to stay with you until you feel better.

Option 4: **Call your doctor** and tell them that you need to set up an urgent appointment. If you don't have a doctor or insurance, you can look in the phone book under community service for Mental Health and Crisis Intervention and set up an appointment.

LIFENET operates 24 hours per day/7 days per week. The hotline's staff of trained mental health professionals help callers find the most appropriate mental health and substance abuse services for their needs. LIFENET is multilingual and multicultural: 1-800-LIFENET (1-800-543-3638)

Kingsbrook's Caribbean Mental Health Program

Provides high quality mental health services in a culturally sensitive environment, addressing depression and related mood disorders. 718-604-5281

Kingsbrook's Caribbean Mental Health Program

Provides high quality mental health services in a culturally sensitive environment, embracing a well-being holistic approach to achieving the emotional well-being of the Caribbean client. 718-604-5441