

Suicide Prevention Information

Information at a Glance

Early Warning Signs

Source: <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Preoccupation with death
- Marked personality change and serious mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulties in school (decline in quality of work)
- Change in eating and sleeping habits
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- Persistent boredom
- Loss of interest in things one cares about

Late Warning Signs

Source: <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-3a.pdf>

- Actually talking about suicide or a plan
- Exhibiting impulsivity such as violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away
- Refusing help, feeling “beyond help”
- Complaining of being a bad person or feeling “rotten inside”
- Making statements about hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness.
- Not tolerating praise or rewards
- Giving verbal hints with statements such as: “I won’t be a problem for you much longer,” “Nothing matters,” “It’s no use,” and “I won’t see you again”
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression-this may mean that the student has already made the decision to escape all problems by ending his/her life
- Giving away favorite possessions
- Making a last will and testament
- Saying other things like: “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I were dead,” “or “I shouldn’t have been born.”

What to Do

Source: <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-6c.pdf>

- Always ensure a student’s safety.
- Send someone for help.
- Listen.
- Be Direct.
- Remain calm.
- Be empathetic.
- Always take the student seriously.
- Know what resources are available in your school before hand.
- Be honest.
- Know your limits.
- Make sure that at each stage of the intervention the student knows what is going on.

What Not to Do

Source: <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/IB-6c.pdf>

- Don’t be judgmental. Listen and show concern.
- Don’t preach to the student.
- Never leave the student alone or send the student away. This may just reinforce feelings of isolation and hopelessness.
- Don’t worry about silence during discussion.
- Don’t under-react or minimize. Even if a student is seeking attention, you should act. The benefits could certainly out way the costs.
- If a student is threatening suicide and does have a weapon, never try to physically take the weapon from the student.

Resources

- http://studentservices.dadeschools.net/crisis/crisis_mgmt.asp
- <http://theguide.fmhi.usf.edu/pdf/Overview.pdf>
- <http://theparentacademy.dadeschools.net/index.htm>