Tips on How to Play a Role in Preventing Suicide

The effects of suicide are not limited to those who die. Suicide is a serious public health problem that has shattered the lives of millions of people, families, and communities nationwide. We can all take action to reduce its toll. A variety of strategies are available for individuals and organizations across the United States to help prevent suicide.

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

• Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States, claiming more than twice as many lives each year as homicides.¹

• On average, more than 33,000 Americans died each year between 2001 and 2009 as a result of suicide — more than one person every 15 minutes.²

• More than eight million adults reported having serious suicidal thoughts in the past year. Two-and-a-half million people reported making a suicide plan in the past year, and 1.1 million reported a suicide attempt in the past year.³

• Nearly 16 percent of students in grades nine to 12 report having seriously considered suicide, and 7.8 percent report having attempted suicide once or more in the past 12 months.⁴
WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS

Everyone can play a role in preventing suicide by being aware of the warning signs of suicidal behaviors:

• Talking about wanting to die; feeling hopeless, trapped, or in unbearable pain; being a burden to others
• Looking for a way to kill oneself
• Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
• Acting anxious, agitated, or reckless
• Sleeping too little or too much
• Withdrawing or feeling isolated
• Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
• Displaying extreme mood swings

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you believe someone is at risk of suicide:

• Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. (This will not put the idea into their heads, or make it more likely that they will attempt suicide.)
• Call the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800.273.TALK (8255).
• Take the person to an emergency room or seek help from a medical or mental health professional.
• Remove any objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
• If possible do not leave the person alone.
• Contact your residence director, Campus Safety at 914.323.5244, or Student Health and Counseling at 914.323.7277.

Resources

For additional information about the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, visit:

• www.samhsa.gov/nssp
• www.actionallianceforsuicideprevention.org/NSSP
• www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
• www.sprc.org

4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth risk behavior surveillance-United States, 2011. MMWR. 2012; 61(4) 1-162