
Warning Signs of Suicide and Ways to Get Help

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Studies suggest that the majority of people who die by suicide give warning signs beforehand, but the signs are not always obvious.

We all — as parents, friends, family and community members — need to be looking for the warning signs of suicide, because they can present an opportunity to save a life. Here's what to look for:

Warning Signs of Suicide

1. Visiting, calling or texting people to say goodbye.
2. Looking for ways to die, such as researching methods on the internet or gathering guns, ropes, pills or knives.
3. Making direct or indirect statements about death, suicide, or suicide ideation/plan.
4. Preoccupation with death or dying.
5. Sudden and extreme changes in mood or behaviors (e.g., changes in routine, behavior, appearance or grooming habits).
6. Increased substance abuse.
7. Reckless, self-destructive and/or high-risk behaviors.
8. Giving away prized possessions.
9. Not tolerating praise or rewards.
10. Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as headaches, stomachaches or fatigue.
11. Signs of severe depression or any of the following:
 - Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” mood
 - Sleeping/appetite changes or significant changes in weight
 - Irritability or agitation
 - Rage or uncontrolled anger
 - Withdrawal or isolation
 - Loss of interest in hobbies or activities
 - Unusual or persistent tiredness or loss of energy
 - Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
12. Expression of any of these thoughts or feelings:
 - Trapped or desperate to escape an intolerable situation
 - Humiliation
 - Being a burden to others
 - Worthlessness
 - Hopelessness
 - Purposelessness or having no reason to live

Please take any of the above warning signs seriously. If you are concerned, ask your children directly about suicide. You are not going to give them an idea that they didn't already have. Talk to them about it in a non-threatening way. Be sure to tell them that you love them and that you are committed to helping them through what may be a very difficult time. Make it a priority to have open and honest conversations about mental health. For additional ideas, please visit our Adapt for Life website:

www.cincinnatichildrens.org/service/p/psychiatry/resources

Suicide rates in teenagers have dramatically increased in the last five years, with the most significant jump in ages 11 and 12. In the state of Ohio, suicide is the leading cause of death for children ages 10–14. Young children are capable of having suicidal thoughts and can act upon them. If you notice that your child is exhibiting some of the above warning signs, please get help.

Ways to Help

- Take your teens to see a doctor or call a crisis line volunteer at 988. If they refuse help, saying things like, *“I love you and I don't want to lose you,”* or *“Please do this for me,”* or *“A professional will be able to help us work this out,”* may persuade them to seek help with you.
- Call an Ohio County Crisis number:
 - Hamilton County: 513-281-CARE (2273)
 - Clermont County: 513-528-SAVE (7283)
 - Butler County: 1-844-4CRISIS
 - Hamilton/West Chester: 513-894-7002
 - Middletown: 513-424-5498
 - Oxford/Hamilton: 513-523-4146
 - Warren/Clinton Counties: 1-877-695-NEED (6333)
- If you believe your teens are in immediate danger or are feeling like they may hurt themselves, take them to the nearest emergency room.
- We recommend you also call our Psychiatric Intake Response Center (PIRC) at 513-636-4124 prior to taking your children to the emergency room at Cincinnati Children's. Our staff can help identify imminent risk and direct you to the mental health services that best meet your children's needs.