

STOP Texas SUICIDES

YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION



YOUTH SUICIDE IN TEXAS

Recent statistics show that youth suicide is still a major problem in the United States. Suicide is currently the third leading cause of death for people 15-24 years old in the U.S. and the second leading cause of death for this age group in Texas. Over 4,000 youth and young adults aged 10-24 die by suicide every year across the country. Female youth attempt suicide more frequently than males, but males die from suicide at a rate about four times higher than females.

The 2017 Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that 17.8% of Texas high school students had seriously thought suicide in the previous year and 14.5% had made a suicide plan, and 12.3% had attempted suicide so severe it required medical attention.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What are the common warning signs that a young person might be considering suicide?

A: Common warning signs include:

- Threatening or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, medication, or other means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary to the person
- Talking about feeling hopeless
- Increasing alcohol or drug use or misuse
- Withdrawing from friends, family and social situations
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger, or seeking revenge
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Dramatic mood changes
- Talking about feeling trapped—like there's no way out
- Signs of anxiousness and agitation
- Not sleeping or sleeping all the time
- Expressing that there is no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life

If one or more of these warning signs are new or if they have recently increased, risk of suicide may be greater. A young person acting differently, perhaps in connection to a painful event also increases the risk. The warning signs may be especially critical if the person has a history of or current problem with depression, alcohol, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or if he or she has made a suicide attempt in the past.

Q: Will bringing up the subject of suicide with a young person increase the likelihood that he or she will attempt suicide?

A: No. All collected evidence shows that bringing up the topic is an important way to prevent suicide. Introducing the topic and showing a willingness to discuss suicide allows the other person to feel heard.

Q: Is it easy for parents and caregivers to tell when a youth is displaying suicidal behavior?

A: Many parents and caregivers assume that it will be easy for them to tell when something is troubling their child or children. Unfortunately, research shows that this is often not the case. It is important for a parent or guardian to be able to identify warning signs. It also shows the importance of asking questions and being open to conversation. See Page 2 of this handout for more information on how to ask about suicide.

Q: Do youth who express suicidal thoughts or behaviors ever do so just to get attention?

A: Not every single youth who expresses suicidal thoughts or behaviors actually plans on attempting. However, it is important that these expressions are taken seriously every time they occur. Research indicates that suicide is often a process, not a random or isolated occurrence. Individuals who attempt suicide usually express their intention to do so and display one or more of the common warning signs prior to the event.

Texas Suicide Prevention Council

TexasSuicidePrevention.org

admin@texassuicideprevention.org

[@StopTXSuicides](https://twitter.com/StopTXSuicides) [bit.ly/2UHgzlc](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

A program of NAMI Texas



YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - CONTINUED

Q: Is suicide preventable?

A: Yes. Many people believe that individuals displaying suicidal behaviors have already made up their minds and will attempt regardless of any help or outreach offered. This belief is entirely wrong. Reaching out to someone displaying warning signs or otherwise indicating that he or she is thinking about suicide is the most important thing a friend, parent, or any other observer can do.

Q: If I suspect that someone I know is thinking about suicide, should I ask them? If so, how?

A: Yes. Asking is the first step in saving a life and is an important way to show that you are hearing them and that you will listen. For more information on this process, see below.

If you suspect that someone you know is thinking about suicide, the best way to approach the situation is to ASK.

ASK the question directly (“Have you thought about suicide?” “Do you want to kill yourself?” “Are you thinking about suicide?”) or indirectly (“Sometimes when people are sad as you are, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?” “Do you ever want to go to bed and never wake up?”).

Once you **ASK**, follow the steps to the right.

1. Find a private area to talk and seek to establish a relationship, if you don’t have one already.
2. Comment on your observations non-judgmentally. Be curious about the perceived problem (how long have they thought about suicide, have there been previous attempts). Be aware of your verbal and non-verbal reactions.
3. **SEEK** to find out if they are at high risk of suicide and who and where they normally go for help. (Primary care or mental health provider, trusted friend or family member).
4. **KNOW** where to get help. If you feel that someone is at risk for suicide, refer to a mental health professional or one of the resources below.



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (call or chat):
 SuicidePreventionLifeline.org
 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
 Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741



Crisis Lines - Texas HHSC Helpline
Dial 211 or call 1-877-541-7905
211texas.org

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration)
www.samhsa.gov

NAMI Texas
www.NamiTexas.org

National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov

Texas Youth Hotline: 1-800-989-6884
Text: 512-872-5777 / Chat:
www.dfps.state.tx.us/Youth_Hotline/

American Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
www.aacap.org

Texas Suicide Prevention Council
TexasSuicidePrevention.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
afsp.org

The Trevor Project (LGBTQ Youth)
Call: 1-866-488-7368
www.thetrevorproject.org

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
hhsc.texas.gov

Suicide Prevention Resource Center
www.sprc.org

American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org