



# Suicide Warning Signs in Children and Teens

*Suicide is a serious and real concern among children and teens. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24<sup>1</sup>. Suicide attempts are often related to other mental health conditions, but not always. Particularly among younger children, suicide attempts can be impulsive<sup>2</sup>. Warning signs of suicide or suicidal statements should always be taken seriously and evaluated by a mental health professional. Suicidal feelings are treatable with appropriate intervention and support.*

## Warning Signs of Suicide<sup>3</sup>

Talking/joking/writing/artwork about death, dying, or suicide

Withdrawing from/saying goodbye to friends and family

Feeling hopeless, having no reason to live

Talking about being a burden to others

Engaging in reckless behavior

Talking positively about/romanticizing death

Giving away possessions

Seeking out pills, weapons, or other ways to kill themselves

Making statements like:  
"I'd be better off dead"  
"I wish I could disappear forever"  
"I can't go on"  
"There's no way out"



Posting about or following accounts related to death on social media

## What can caregivers do?

*Ask your child if they are depressed or thinking about suicide. This will not put the thought into their head, rather it will give them an opportunity to talk about their concerns<sup>1,4</sup>.*

- Are you feeling sad or depressed?
- Are you thinking (have you ever thought) about hurting or killing yourself?
- Do you wish you were dead?
- Do you think that you or your family would be better off if you were dead?

## Helplines & Hotlines

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

☎ 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
🌐 [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### SAMHSA National Helpline

☎ 1-800-662-HELP (4357)  
🌐 [samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](http://samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)

### NAMI Helpline

☎ 1-800-950-NAMI (6264)  
🌐 [nami.org/help](http://nami.org/help)

### SAFE PLACE

💬 Text SAFE to 44357  
🌐 [nationalsafeplace.org](http://nationalsafeplace.org)

### The Trevor Project

☎ 1-866-488-7386  
💬 Text START to 678678  
🌐 [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org)

### Hopeline

☎ 1-800-442-HOPE (4673)  
💬 Text HOPELINE to 741741  
🌐 [centerforsuicideawareness.org/hopeline](http://centerforsuicideawareness.org/hopeline)

### TeenLine

☎ 1-800-852-8336  
💬 Text TEEN to 839863  
🌐 [teenlineonline.org](http://teenlineonline.org)

### The JED Foundation

☎ 1-800-273-TALK (8255)  
💬 Text START to 741741  
🌐 [jedfoundation.org](http://jedfoundation.org)

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. (May 2021). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. [www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars)

<sup>2</sup>American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. (June 2018). Suicide in Children and Teens. [www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families\\_and\\_Youth/Faces\\_For\\_Families/FFF-Guide-Teen-Suicide-010.aspx](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Faces_For_Families/FFF-Guide-Teen-Suicide-010.aspx)

<sup>3</sup>Smith, M., Robinson, L., Segal, J., & Reid, S. (2021). Parent's Guide to Teen Depression. [www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/parents-guide-to-teen-depression.htm#](http://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/parents-guide-to-teen-depression.htm#)

<sup>4</sup>Horowitz, L. M., Bridge, J. A., Teach, S. J., Ballard, E., Klima, J., Rosenstein, D.L., ... & Pao, M. (2012). Asl Suicide-Screening Questions (ASQ): a brief instrument for the pediatric emergency department. Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 166(12), 1170-1176.