

PARENT *alk*

Understanding Student Suicide

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in college-aged students. It's important to know that suicide is preventable. Most people who report having suicidal thoughts or ideations have not actually decided if they want to end their lives. It is common for people who are feeling suicidal to show warning signs and to reach out to family and friends for support. You can help prevent suicide by learning the signs and symptoms and how to talk to someone who is feeling suicidal.

INSIDE...

- Talking with your student
- Risk factors
- Resources

Warning Signs

Look for warning signs and symptoms, especially changes in behavior or entirely new behavior patterns. Most people who commit suicide generally exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.



TALK

If a person talks about:

- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Experiencing unbearable pain
- Having no reason to live
- Killing themselves



BEHAVIORS

Specific things to look out for include:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online for materials or means
- Acting recklessly
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family or friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions



MOOD

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Anxiety

Have the Conversation

If you recognize any signs or symptoms from your student, or if they verbally express an intent to commit suicide, it is important that you address this immediately by starting a conversation. It can be difficult to talk about suicide, but this has been proven the most effective way to start getting your student the help they need.

1. Have a conversation with your student about any warning signs, risk factors, or verbal hints that you have noticed. Express concern!
2. Ask the following questions:
 - Are you thinking about suicide?
 - Do you have a plan? If yes, then ask:
 - Have you decided how to commit suicide?
 - Have you decided when you plan on committing suicide?
 - Have you taken any steps to secure the means needed to commit suicide?
3. If the threat of suicide is imminent, call 9-1-1 immediately and stay with your student. Remove any potentially lethal objects from the immediate vicinity and stay with them until help arrives.
4. If the threat of suicide is not as immediate, continue the conversation. Engage in active listening - let them talk - and do so without judgment. Never offer advice, but do work to get them connected to the resources they will need to get better.
5. If you're unsure of what to do, you or your student can reach out to the National Suicide Hotline or Crisis Text Line for 24/7 assistance. These numbers are listed below in the Resources section.
6. Don't be afraid to reach out for help for yourself. It can be difficult to process emotions that come from learning of your student's suicidal thoughts. You can use any of the resources listed below for yourself or your student.

Understand the Risk Factors

- Previous suicide attempts or family history of suicide attempts
- Mental illness, depression, or other mood disorders
- Substance abuse disorders
- Serious or chronic mental illness, health condition, or pain
- History of trauma or abuse
- Prolonged stress
- Isolation
- Recent tragedy or loss
- Stress from prejudice or discrimination
- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs

Resources

For immediate assistance, call 9-1-1

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Suicide Prevention Crisis Text Line
741-741

Spokane First Call for Help
509-838-4428

EWU Counseling and Psychological Services
Cheney Campus
509-359-2366

EWU Counseling and Psychological Services
Spokane Campus
509-828-1398

EWU Police
509-359-7676

Cheney Police
509-498-9235



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