



Oakland County
Youth Suicide Prevention

TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS

FACTS ABOUT SUICIDE

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for those ages 10 to 34 in the U.S. *CDC, 2016*
- Males are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than females. *CDC, 2016*
- For each suicide death, family and close friends are at a higher risk for suicide themselves.
- Take all suicidal thoughts, threats, and behaviors seriously.
- Asking directly about suicide tells your child it's ok to talk about it with you.
- Most suicidal people want to end severe emotional pain.
- Emotional pain makes it hard to think clearly, consider options, or remember reasons for living.



Web Resources:

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
afsp.org

National Alliance on Mental Illness- Michigan
namimi.org

Oakland County Youth Suicide Prevention Task Force
oakgov.com/SuicidePrevention

Suicide Prevention Resource Center
sprc.org

RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that can increase the chance that a person may try to take their life.

Prior suicide attempt

- This is the strongest predictor of future attempts.

Loss of a loved one to suicide

- Being a survivor of suicide loss can increase risk.

Substance use

- Using alcohol and other drugs can be an attempt to self-medicate to ease any pain related to depression, traumatic events, or other issues.

Mental health conditions

- 50% of all lifetimes cases of mental health conditions begin by age 14. *NIMH, 2016*

Interpersonal conflict

Conflicts are a basic part of everyday life. For youth, some conflicts can seem impossible to handle. As an adult, listening with empathy and providing support is key.



- **Bullying:** This can take place in-person or online.
- **Trauma:** Examples may include injury, assault, legal trouble, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- **Relationship breakups:** Being impulsive combined with potential inability to think through consequences before acting can increase risk for suicide following a breakup.
- **Sexting:** Teach your children to never take images they don't want family or future employers to see. Forwarding a sexual picture of a minor is a crime, even for a minor who forwards it.
- **Recent loss:** Examples include moving, changing schools, divorce, or death of a loved one.
- **Questioning sexual orientation or gender identity:** LGBTQ+ youth are more likely than their peers to be depressed and/or attempt suicide.

A STRONG CONNECTION
TO FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND
COMMUNITY IS A MAJOR
PROTECTIVE FACTOR



WARNING SIGNS



Call 911 if:

- A suicide attempt has occurred.
- A weapon is present during a suicide crisis.
- The person is out of control or if your safety is threatened.

Take immediate action and call 800.231.1127 (Common Ground) if someone:

- Makes a serious threat to kill themselves such as:
 "I wish I were dead."
 "If... doesn't happen, I'll kill myself."
 "I can't go on anymore."
- Looks for a way to carry out a suicide plan.
- Talks about death or suicide in text messages, social media sites, or in poems/music.
- Gives away their possessions.

SUICIDAL thoughts and/or actions are signs of **EXTREME DISTRESS**, NOT harmless bids for attention.

Call 800.231.1127 if someone exhibits uncharacteristic behavior:

- Depression / Hopelessness
- Rage, anger, or revenge-seeking
- Reckless or risky behavior
- Expressions of feeling trapped, like there's no way out
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawal from family or friends
- Anxiety or agitation
- Dramatic mood changes
- Discussions of no reason for living or no sense of purpose
- Changes in sleeping or eating habits



9 OUT OF 100 High school students attempted suicide in the past 12 months

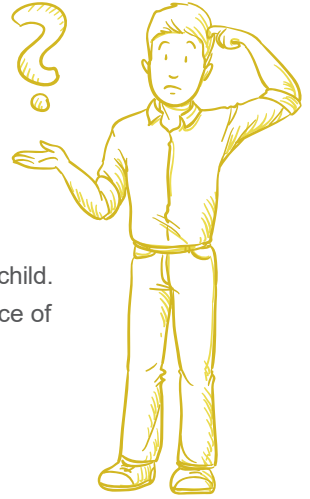



2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Michigan High School Survey

PREVENTION

What you can do right now:

- Know suicide risk factors and warning signs.
- Share this toolkit with your child.
- Have a discussion with your child about what to do if they are concerned about themselves or a friend.
- Teach skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- Maintain a supportive and involved relationship with your child.
- Encourage involvement in sports, activities at school/place of worship, or volunteering.
- Help your teen develop strong communication skills.
- Get medical care for depression and substance use.
- Don't leave a depressed or suicidal teen home alone. Most suicides occur in the early afternoon/evening in the teen's home.



1 in 3 { teens say prescription painkillers or stimulants are EASY to get from their parents' medicine cabinets. 

2017 Monitoring the Future Survey, National Institute on Drug Abuse

Remove or secure these items:

Prescription and over-the-counter medications

- Keep medications, including vitamins, where your kids or their friends cannot access them.
- Don't keep lethal doses of medication on hand. A pharmacist can advise you on safe quantities.
- Safely discard unused medications. Visit oakgov.com/PrescriptionDrugs for drop-off locations.

Alcohol and drugs

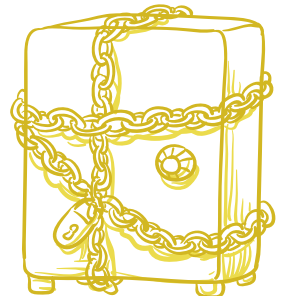
- Talk to your kids about substance use as a major risk factor for suicide.
- If your teen has a pattern of substance use, seek treatment services. Substance use could be an attempt to self-medicate a mental illness.
- Substance use makes youth more likely to choose lethal means, such as guns. Remove firearms from your home.

Poisons

- Lock up potentially harmful common household products, including household cleaners, products containing alcohol (such as mouthwash, hand sanitizer, etc.), and cosmetics (such as nail polish remover, perfume, etc.).

Guns

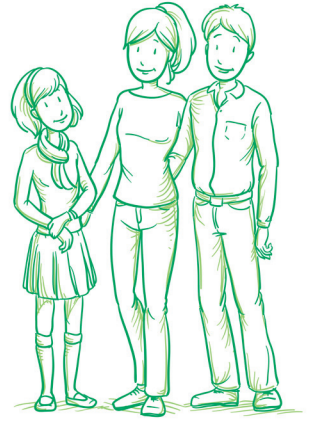
- Firearms are responsible for more than half of all suicide deaths. Remove firearms from your home if possible. Securely lock firearms and ammunition separately.



TALKING TO YOUR KIDS & RESOURCES

How to start a conversation about suicide:

- “I am feeling concerned about you lately.”
- “What’s going on? It might help to talk about it.”
- “Lately, I’ve noticed some differences in you. How are you doing?”
- “Sometimes when people feel the way you do, they’re thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?”



Questions you can ask:

- “When did you begin feeling like this?”
- “Did something happen that made you start feeling this way?”
- “Could you tell me more about that?”
- “How can I support you right now?”

What to say that can help:

- “You are not alone – I’m here for you.”
- “I may not understand exactly how you feel, but I love you and want to help.”
- “I think you feel there is no way out. Let’s talk about some options.”

Conversation Dos and Don’ts

- **DO** listen and let them take the lead.
- **DON’T** offer advice or try to solve their problems unless asked.
- **DO** ask open-ended questions.
- **DON’T** demand answers. Let them open up at their own pace.
- **DO** let them know it’s ok to feel the way they do.



Common Ground Resource & Crisis Helpline

Call/Text: 800-231-1127 (24/7)

Chat: commongroundhelps.org (24/7)

Alliance of Coalitions for Healthy Communities

248-221-7101 • achcmi.org

Community Network Services (for ages 18+)

248-745-4900 • cnshealthcare.org

Easterseals Michigan

National: 800-75-SEALS • Local: 248-475-6400 • essmichigan.org

Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit

248-592-2313 • jfsdetroit.org

Oakland Community Health Network

800-341-2003 • oaklandchn.org

Oakland County Health Division Nurse on Call

800-848-5533 • noc@oakgov.com

Oakland Family Services

248-858-7766 • oaklandfamilyservices.org

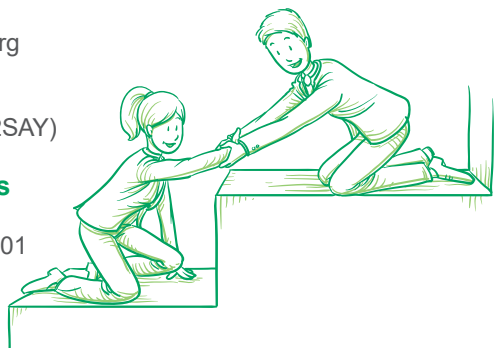
OK2SAY

michigan.gov/ok2say • Text 652729 (OK2SAY)

Training and Treatment Innovations

(for ages 18+)

Oxford: 248-969-9932 • Troy: 248-524-8801
ttiinc.org



The Trevor Project Lifeline

866-488-7386 • thetrevorproject.org

MYTH

Talking about suicide will cause someone to attempt.

FACT

Talking openly about suicide reduces the risk.
Be direct in a caring, non-judgmental way.

MYTH

Someone threatening suicide is not serious about it.

FACT

It's better to overestimate the risk of suicide and intervene than to ignore or minimize behaviors.

MYTH

Suicide cannot be prevented because a suicidal person will find a way to do it.

FACT

Most suicidal people do not want to die, they want their pain to end. Recognizing warning signs is key.

MYTH

Suicide often happens without warning.

FACT

Almost everyone who dies by suicide displays some sort of warning sign.