

# Looking out for the health of your student

Did you know that suicide is the second leading cause of death for college students? Oregon Institute of Technology is working to reduce the risk of suicide in its students in a variety of ways, including its participation in the Oregon University Suicide Prevention Project (OUSPP). The OUSPP was funded in 2005 by a federal grant under the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act, and is a joint effort by all eight public universities in Oregon to reduce suicide risk for students.

Young adulthood can be a challenging time. In 1997, the Center for Disease Control reported that ten percent of college students surveyed considered suicide during the previous 12 months. Almost seven percent actually made plans to kill themselves. *The good news is that youth enrolled in college are at half the risk of suicide when compared to their non-enrolled peers.*

To reduce suicide risk on campus, the OUSPP's multifaceted effort includes: 1) raising awareness among students, parents, faculty and staff about suicide risk, warning signs and treatment resources, 2) providing training for health and mental health staff on "best practices" for identifying and working effectively with suicidal students, 3) training campus gatekeepers who are uniquely positioned to identify students at-risk for suicide and to refer them for professional help, and 4) establishing suicide task forces on each campus to develop suicide prevention and postvention plans.

It's good practice for parents to be aware of the symptoms of depression in college students. Depression often precedes suicidal behavior. Symptoms of depression include:

Feeling sad, empty, discouraged or depressed

Feeling like a failure

Hopelessness

Frequent crying

Withdrawing from people

Loss of interest in activities

Weight loss or weight gain

Sleeping too much or too little

Fatigue or low energy

Feeling worthless

Low self-esteem

Excessive guilt

Difficulty concentrating

Indecisiveness

Irritability

Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Through OIT's Student Health Center and its Counseling Service, students can access resources to help them through their depression. If you are concerned about the health of your son or daughter, refer him/her to campus resources. If your concerns persist, or if you feel you need a quick consultation, you may want to contact one of the offices below and let us know of your concerns. We want to be your partner in promoting the health of your children.

Director of Housing & Residence Life (for students in the Residence Hall)...885-1094

Director of Counseling.....885-1015

Director of Student Health.....885-1800

Dean of Students.....885-1011

Campus Safety (24-hour emergency number).....885-0911

For more information about the Oregon University Suicide Prevention Project, visit <http://counseling.uoregon.edu/OUSPP.htm>. For more information about depression, suicide and college students, visit the National Mental Health Association at [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org), or the Jed Foundation at [www.jedfoundation.org](http://www.jedfoundation.org).