

Suicide on Campus: Risks and Resources

Presented by:

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Facts

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students (about 1100 deaths per year).
- 10% of college students report seriously considering suicide in the past year

You can help!

- Most suicidal people don't really want to die—they just want their pain to end.
- About 80% of the time people who kill themselves have given definite signals or talked about suicide.
- You won't put the idea of suicide in their head by asking. You will help reduce the risk!

Know the risk factors and warning signs

Key warning signs:

- Prior suicide attempt
- Feeling worthless, hopeless or having excessive guilt
- Having thoughts of death or killing oneself
- Talking openly or indirectly about ending one's life
- Taking unnecessary or life-threatening risks
- Giving away personal possessions
- Gaining access to lethal means

Risk factors:

- Depressed or irritable mood
- Social withdrawal
- Giving up previously enjoyed activities
- Sudden personality or behavior change
- Changes in sleeping or eating routines
- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Decrease in academic performance

- Frequent crying
- Feeling exhausted
- Difficulty concentrating
- Moping around or feeling very agitated
- Losing connections with family and friends
- Poor self-care
- Recent loss

Risk factors for college students:

- Recent relationship breakup.
- Young men are six times more likely than women to die by suicide.
- More than ½ of all suicides involve drugs or alcohol.

The Intervention Three-Step

1. Step One: Show you care

Do's

- Be a good listener and supportive friend.
- Be patient.
- Take all talk of suicide seriously.

Remember:

- Your genuine interest is what's most important.
 - I'm concerned about you...
 - Tell me about your problems.
 - You mean a lot to me and I want to help.
 - I care about you, and I don't want you to kill yourself.
 - I want to help you get through this.

Don'ts

- Don't worry about saying the wrong thing.
- Don't offer naïve reassurance.

“Everything will be OK.” “Things can't be that bad.”

- Don't tell them they shouldn't be thinking of suicide.
- Don't be judgmental or moralize.

“Suicide is a sin, it’s wrong, you’ll go to hell.”

2. Step Two: Ask about suicide

Ask: Have you been thinking about suicide?

Have you thought how you would do it?

How close have you come to taking action?

Try to place the person on a continuum:

Passive Thoughts > Active thoughts > Thoughts w/ Plan > Intention to Act

3. Step Three: Get help

Help for them:

- Avoid leaving the person alone.
- Reassure the person.
- Know referral resources.
- Offer to help them get engaged.
- Give crisis line information.
- Consider restricting their access to the means of suicide.

Help for you:

- Don’t promise confidentiality.
- Don’t keep it to yourself.
- Do talk with someone about YOUR concerns. Options for support:

Counseling, Student Health, Dean of Students, Disability Services, Residence Life staff.