



# TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE

## WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUTH SUICIDE?

(from the American Association of Suicidology)

### Warning Signs of Acute Risk:

- Threatening to hurt or kill him or herself, or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself;
- Looking for ways to kill him/herself by seeking access to firearms, available pills, or other means;
- Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide, when these actions are out of the ordinary.

### Additional Warning Signs:

- Increased **substance** (alcohol or drug) **use**
- No reason for living; no sense of **purpose** in life
- **Anxiety**, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all of the time
- Feeling **trapped** - like there's no way out
- **Hopelessness**
- **Withdrawal** from friends, family and society
- Rage, uncontrolled **anger**, seeking revenge
- Acting **reckless** or engaging in risky activities, seemingly without thinking
- Dramatic **mood changes**

**It is important to remember the signs and risk factors listed are generalities and not exhaustive lists.** Not all youth who attempt suicide will exhibit these kinds of symptoms AND not all students who exhibit these behaviors are suicidal.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP MY CHILD SAFE?

- ✓ **LISTEN.** Avoid making judging statements such as “you don’t want to do that.” Instead make statements such as “Help me understand what life is like for you right now”.
- ✓ **ASK.** Talking about suicide does not make a student suicidal. Asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts give him/her permission to talk about it. Asking sends the message that you are concerned and want to help.
- ✓ **TAKE SIGNS SERIOUSLY.** Studies have found that more than 75% of people who die by suicide showed some of the warning signs in the weeks or months prior to their death.
- ✓ **GET HELP.** If you have concerns that your child is suicidal, seek immediate help from a mental health practitioner. Suicidal students need to be evaluated to assess risk and develop a treatment plan. You may want to consult with your insurance company to obtain a list of mental health providers covered by your insurance. You can also ask school staff for information on free or low-cost counseling resources.
- ✓ **PROHIBIT ACCESS TO WEAPONS, PRESCRIPTIONS DRUGS, MEDICATION, AND OTHER MEANS.**
- ✓ **DO NOT LEAVE HIM OR HER ALONE.** Supervise your child until you can get help from a mental health professional.
- ✓ **REASSURE YOUR CHILD THAT LIFE CAN GET BETTER.** Many suicidal people have lost all hope that life can improve. They may have difficulty problem solving even simple issues. Remind your child that no matter how bad things are, the problem can be worked out. Offer your help.

### EMERGENCY RESOURCES

POLICE/ Emergency Medical Care	911
Colorado Crisis Services Hotline	1-800-493-TALK (1-800-493-8255) <a href="http://www.coloradocrisiservices.com">www.coloradocrisiservices.com</a>
Arapahoe Douglas Mental Health	Crisis Line (303)730-3303 Information:(303)730-8858 <a href="http://www.admhn.org">www.admhn.org</a>
	24 hour Urgent Walk-in Center: 6509 S. Santa Fe Drive

### For more information about depression and suicide:

Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide	<a href="http://www.sptsusa.org">www.sptsusa.org</a>
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention	<a href="http://www.afsp.org">www.afsp.org</a>
American Association of Suicidology	<a href="http://www.suicideology.org">www.suicideology.org</a>
National Mental Health Association	<a href="http://www.nmha.org">www.nmha.org</a>