

# SUICIDE: What Every Parent Should Know

- Suicide is preventable. Most suicidal individuals desperately want to live; they are just unable to see alternatives to their problems
- Suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death for young people (ages 15-19 and 15-24)
- Most adolescent suicides occur after school hours and in the teen's own home
- Not all adolescent suicide attempters admit their intent. Therefore, any deliberate self-harming behaviors should be considered serious and in need of further evaluation
- Most adolescent suicides are precipitated by interpersonal conflicts
- Firearms are currently the most utilized method of suicide
- Characteristics of increased risk:
  - preoccupation with death and talk of suicide
  - withdrawal from friends and activities
  - social isolation
  - drastic changes in behavior
  - giving away prized possessions
  - psychiatric disorders (depression, impulsive aggressive behavior, bipolar disorder, certain anxiety disorders)
  - increased use of alcohol or drugs
  - previous suicide attempts
- The risk is even greater if there is access to firearms and situational stress



SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL  
of St. Joseph County and Surrounding Areas

## What Every PARENT Should Do...

- Take Immediate Action. Get your child professional help (medical or mental health) and do not leave your child alone if your child is contemplating suicide or if your gut tells you something is wrong. Professional help should include intensive treatment of any underlying mental illness.
- Talk to and support your child (listen, avoid undue criticism, remain connected). Do not be afraid to talk about suicide. Talking about it will not put thoughts into their heads. All available evidence indicates that talking to your child lowers the risk.
- Suicide-Proof Your Home. Make pills, knives, and all firearms inaccessible.
- Listen to Your Child's Friends. Be open and ask questions, friends may be worried but uncomfortable to speak up.
- Utilize School and Community Resources. Know what resources are available. During a crisis is not the time to begin searching for options.
- Know the facts and be informed (library, local support groups, Internet)



SUICIDE PREVENTION COUNCIL  
of St. Joseph County and Surrounding Areas

**For more information visit our website at**  
**[www.sjcsuicideprevention.com](http://www.sjcsuicideprevention.com)**  
**or call (574) 220-6381.**

**Crisis and Suicide Intervention**

**National HOTLINE**

**1-800-273-TALK**

**Local Help: Emergency Services**

**(877) 234-0061 toll free**

**(574) 234-0061 local**

*(operated by Madison Center)*