



## SUICIDE: Know the Warning Signs

**The illnesses that cause suicide can distort thinking, leaving people not able to think clearly or rationally. Their illness can cause thoughts of hopelessness and helplessness, which may then lead to suicidal thoughts. Below is a condensed list of warning signs, not totally inclusive:**

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself or talking about wanting to hurt or kill oneself.
- Looking for ways to kill oneself by seeking access to firearms, pills, or other means. Obsession with guns or knives.
- Talking, writing or joking about death, dying, or suicide when these actions are out of the ordinary for the person.
- Feeling rage or uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge.
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities—seemingly without thinking.
- Feeling trapped—like there is no way out.
- Increased alcohol or drug use.
- Withdrawing from friends, family, and society.
- Declining school performance.
- Feeling of failure or a disappointment to others.
- Feeling anxious, agitated, or unable to sleep or sleeping all the time.
- Experiencing dramatic mood changes: suddenly happier or calmer.
- Self-harm behaviors such as cutting or burning.
- Unusual visiting or calling people one cares about—saying their good-byes.
- Giving possessions away-setting affairs in order.
- Physical complaints: ex. frequent stomach distress or headaches, symptoms of anxiety, such as racing heart or shortness of breath.
- Truly believes that it would better, for everyone, if they were dead.
- Believes if they could join a loved one who died, they would then be rid of their pain and be at peace.
- Hopeless...feeling they will never get better, never feel better. Seeing no reason for living or having no sense of purpose in life.

### **What to do:**

- **Be direct**
- **Be willing to listen**
- **Be non-judgmental**
- **Show interest and support**
- **Don't act shocked**
- **Seek support and utilize the resource list in the Parent Toolkit**
- **Notify your school counselor or nurse**

