

# Suicide Prevention TIPS for PARENTS



- Talk to your youth regularly about how they are feeling, not just about what they did today. If they don't want to talk at that moment, then let them know you are there for them when they are ready to talk and to know that you will always be there to support them no matter what.
- Be sure to truly listen when your youth talks to you about their issues. And don't be too quick to offer up your opinions or solutions. Let them talk it out, then ask open-ended questions that allow them to expand and give better information, instead of a yes or no answer.
- You can help support a child's sense of safety by allowing them a place where they experience consistency and routine. Consistency is key.
- Remember that if your child doesn't think you're listening about the "small things" (Video games, Twitch streamers, Youtubers they may follow, etc.) they may not come to you with the "big things".
- Be sure to help them find solutions to other problems as they arise. The process of good problem-solving helps to build resolution and confidence.
- Take care of your mental health, talk openly about how you feel and how you deal with those feelings. This may help them see someone else dealing with disappointments, mistakes, and loss. And see how to respond, in a healthy manner.
- Make sure you portray mental health as a normal and important part of one's overall health. Mental health is just as important as physical health (if not more so).
- If a suicide happens in your youth's school, family, or friends, talk with them about it, ask their thoughts and feeling about the incident. Talk about what other things that person could do instead of suicide.
- In the case of another youth dying by suicide at their school, the child may blame himself or herself for the death in some way (e.g., "If I had only behaved better, they wouldn't have wanted to kill himself"). This may lead to feelings of abandonment as well as concerns regarding the deceased person's true feelings the student. Reassure them that this is not their fault and that there was no definitive action they could have taken to prevent it.
- Give accurate information about suicide without unnecessary details. Additional resentment can build if youth believe you are deliberately misleading them. Suicide is

a complicated behavior. It is not caused by a single event such as a bad grade, an argument with parents, or the breakup of a relationship. If asked, it is okay to give basic facts about the method, but don't give graphic details or talk at length about it. The focus should be not on how someone killed themselves but rather on how to cope with feelings of sadness, loss, anger, etc.

- In the case of concern about suicidal contagion; remember that while this is a real issue, talking about suicide in a calm, straightforward manner does not put ideas into kids' minds.