



# YOUTH SUICIDE

Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15 to 24-year-olds and the sixth leading cause of death for 5- to 14-year-olds. Attempted suicides are even more common.

**SUICIDE IS A SERIOUS AND GROWING PROBLEM AMONG YOUTH**



**LEFT UNTREATED, DEPRESSION LEADS THOUSANDS OF YOUTH TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES EACH YEAR. KNOWING THE RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE AND WHO IS AT RISK CAN HELP REDUCE THE SUICIDE RATE.**

**SUICIDE IS TRAGIC, BUT OFTEN IS PREVENTABLE.**

# YOUTH SUICIDE

## What does Youth Suicide look like?

The majority of children and adolescents who attempt suicide have a significant mental health disorder

### Depression and Suicide



Depression and suicidal feelings are treatable mental disorders. Children and adolescents need to have their illness recognized and diagnosed, and appropriate treatment plans developed.

### Permanent Solution to a Temporary Crisis

Among younger children, suicide attempts are often impulsive. They may be associated with feelings of sadness, confusion and anger.

Among teenagers, suicide attempts may be associated with feelings of stress, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty, disappointment and loss.

For some teens, suicide may appear to be a solution to their problems.

## Who is at risk of suicide?

Suicide does not discriminate. Youth of all genders, ages, and ethnicities can be at risk for suicide.

Thoughts about suicide and suicide attempts are often associated with depression.

In addition to depression, other risk factors include:

Family history of suicide attempts

Exposure to violence

Impulsivity

Aggressive or Disruptive Behavior

Access to firearms

Bullying

Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness

Acute loss or rejection

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## What are the warning signs of Youth Suicide?

### Emotional Symptoms

Threats of suicide—either direct or indirect.

Verbal hints such as "I won't be around much longer" or "It's hopeless."

Obsession with death.

Dramatic change in personality

Irritability

### Physical Symptoms

Changes in school performance.

Putting affairs in order (for example, giving or throwing away favorite possessions).

Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

Dramatic change in appearance.

### What should parents do if they think a child is suicidal?

**Ask the child or teen** if he or she feels depressed or thinks about suicide or death. Speaking openly and honestly allows the child to confide in you and gives you a chance to express your concern.

**Let the child or teen know that you care and want to help.**

**Seek professional help.** It is essential to seek expert advice from a mental health professional that has experience helping depressed children and teens.

**Alert key adults in the child's life**—family, friends, teachers. Inform the child's parents or primary caregiver, and recommend that they seek professional assistance for their child or teen.

**NATIONAL SUICIDE  
PREVENTION LIFELINE  
1-800-273-(TALK) 8255**

**TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.**  
IF YOU THINK THE SITUATION MAY BE  
SERIOUS, SEEK IMMEDIATE HELP.  
IF NECESSARY, BREAK CONFIDENCE IN  
ORDER TO SAVE A LIFE.



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**For Immediate Access to Routine or Crisis Services**  
**Georgia Crisis & Access Line**  
**1-800-715-4225**  
**[mygcal.com](http://mygcal.com)**

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[www.nimh.gov](http://www.nimh.gov)