



Suicide Awareness: Be the Difference!

Effectively Helping Friends and
Loved Ones





College Student Suicide

- Suicide is the *second leading cause of death* for college students.
- And...the number one cause of suicide for college student suicides (and *all* suicides) is **untreated depression**.
- Going to college can be a difficult transition period in which students may feel lost, lonely, confused, anxious, inadequate, and stressed.



The Hidden Minority

- Studies indicate that college students who are suicidal are quiet, reserved, depressed, and socially isolated. Thus, it is up to all of us to try to identify the suicide warning signs and get help for them.
- Additionally, a survey indicates that one in five (20%) college students believe that their depression level is higher than it should be, yet only 6% say that they would seek help. That's a difference of 14%.
- Crafton Hills College: 14% of our student population is **700 students!**

The Basics

- ▶ A suicidal person may not ask for help, but that doesn't mean that help isn't wanted. Most people who commit suicide don't want to die—**they just want to stop hurting.**

Help is needed **AND**
wanted!

- ▶ Suicide is a desperate attempt to escape suffering that has become unbearable. Blinded by feelings of self-loathing, hopelessness, and isolation, a suicidal person can't see any way of finding relief except through death. ***They wish there was an alternative to committing suicide, but they just can't see one.***



Suicide Warning Signs: Be Alert!

Things to Look For in *Recent* Behavior

- Appearing **depressed or sad** most of the time.
 - (Untreated depression is the number one cause for suicide.)
 - **Talking or writing about death** or suicide.
 - **Withdrawing** from family and friends.
 - Feeling **hopeless**.
 - Feeling **helpless**.
- 



Suicide Warning Signs: **Be Alert!**

Things to Look For in *Recent* Behavior

- Feeling strong anger or rage.
 - Feeling trapped -- like there is no way out of a situation.
 - Experiencing dramatic mood changes.
 - Abusing drugs or alcohol.
 - Exhibiting a change in personality.
 - Acting impulsively.
- 



Suicide Warning Signs: **Be Alert!**

Things to Look For in Recent Behavior

- 
- Losing interest in most activities.
 - Experiencing a change in sleeping habits.
 - Experiencing a change in eating habits.
 - Performing poorly at work or in school.
 - Giving away prized possessions.
 - Writing a will.
 - Feeling excessive guilt or shame.
 - Acting recklessly.



Are We Paying Attention?

- ▶ It should be noted that some people who die by suicide do not show any suicide warning signs.
- ▶ But about 75 percent of those who die by suicide do exhibit some suicide warning signs, so we need to be aware of what the suicide warning signs are and try to spot them in people.



The Most Powerful Message: What Matters **Most**

Suicide.org

Suicide is NEVER the answer,
getting help is the answer.
If you are suicidal, have attempted
suicide,
or are a suicide survivor,
you will find help, hope, comfort,
understanding,
support, love, and extensive resources
here.

I Love You.

And I will never stop fighting for you!

Kevin Caruso

Suicide.org

Founder, Executive Director, Editor-in-
Chief



How to Help a Suicidal Person Who May Need Hospitalization

- ▶ **Always** take suicidal comments very seriously. When a person says that he or she is thinking about suicide, you must **always** take the comments seriously. Assuming that the person is only seeking attention is a very serious, and potentially disastrous, error. **Get help immediately.**
- ▶ Always remember that **you need to call 911** or your local emergency number immediately for anyone who appears at risk for suicide. ***Do not hesitate!***



How to Help a Suicidal Person Who Needs Hospitalization (Two)

- ▶ **Try not to act shocked.** The person is already highly distressed, and if you are shocked by what is said, the person will become more distressed. Stay calm, and talk with him or her in a matter-of-fact manner, but get help immediately. If the person is at a high risk for suicide, call 911 immediately.
- ▶ **Physically stay with the person until qualified help arrives.**
- ▶ **Do not handle the situation by yourself.** A suicidal person needs immediate assistance from qualified mental health professionals. Again, **call 911, 1-800-SUICIDE, or 1-800-273-TALK.** And do not allow untrained individuals to act as counselors to the individual.



Talk Openly About Suicide.

(Suicidal Thoughts? Method? Means? Time Frame?)

- ▶ Ask the person, "Are you feeling so bad that you are **thinking about suicide?**"
 - ▶ If the answer is yes, ask, "Do you have what you need to do it?" (**Means**)
 - ▶ If the answer is yes, ask, "Have you thought about **how** you would do it?"
 - ▶ If the answer is yes, ask, "Have you thought about **when** you would do it?"
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No Secrets!



- ▶ If someone tells you that you need to keep his or her suicidal intentions a secret, then you never can keep that "secret." **Under no circumstances** can you keep a "secret" that could cause someone's death! You are not violating a privileged communication; you are taking the steps necessary to prevent a suicide. That is an expression of love, caring, and deep concern, and is the only ethical choice in a situation as serious as this.



Effectively Helping

- ▶ **Listen attentively** to everything that the person has to say. Let the person talk as much as he or she wants to. Listen closely so that you can be as supportive as possible, and **learn as much as possible** about what is causing the suicidal feelings.
- ▶ Comfort the person with words of encouragement. Use common sense to offer words of support. Remember that intense emotional pain can be overwhelming, so be as gentle and caring as possible. There is no script to use in situations like these, because each person and each situation is different. Listen carefully, and offer encouraging words when appropriate.



Effectively Helping

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- Remember that intense emotional pain can be overwhelming, so be as gentle and caring as possible. There is no script to use in situations like these, because each person and each situation is different.
- Listen carefully, and offer encouraging words when appropriate.
- But: **Don't minimize!** (“There, there; it’ll be all right.”)

What *You* Can Do to Prevent Suicide



- Reach Out - Ask them directly if they are thinking about suicide. It needs to be a direct question that can't be misinterpreted.

"Are you thinking about suicide?"

- Most people with thoughts of suicide want to talk about it. They want to live – but desperately need someone to hear their pain and offer them help to keep safe.

- Listen to them - Allow them to express their feelings. **Let *them* do most of the talking.** They will often feel a great sense of relief that someone wants to talk to them (and especially listen to them) about their darkest thoughts.

Pain Isn't Always Obvious

**KNOW
THE SIGNS**

suicideispreventable.org

Does Someone Appear Suicidal?

- ▶ **Emergency – 911**
- ▶ CHC Campus Police – **3275**
- ▶ If someone is **not** in immediate danger because of thoughts of suicide, but needs someone to talk with about their suicidal feelings, please **do not hesitate** to call one of the following national suicide prevention lines:
 - ▶ **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**
1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)
- ▶ **Suicide and Crisis Hotline (951) 686- 4357**
Referrals for shelter, clothing, counseling