

## Youth Suicide in Utah

The following statistics are for Utah Youth ages 15-19 in 2011. (<http://www.cdc.gov/>)

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth aged 15-19 in Utah.
- 19 Students died by suicide in 2011.
- 43,550 (26.52%) of Utah students feel sad or hopeless for an extended period of time.
- 23,000 (14%) of students in Utah seriously considered suicide.
- 19,720 (12%) of Utah students made a plan for suicide in the last year.
- 11,503 (7%) of Utah students attempted suicide.
- Over 300 youth received medical assistance for attempted suicide.

### Suicide Warning Signs:

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” Warning signs may include the following:

- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts and/or feelings.
- Sad, depressed, cranky, defiant/oppositional, hate everything attitude, life is so unfair.
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live; saying “I’m not worth anything or can’t do anything right.”

- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain. Talking about being a burden to others.
- Sleeping too little or too much, no energy. Not eating or overeating.
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves.
- Displaying extreme mood swings, showing rage or talking about seeking revenge.
- Repeated contact from school. Example; “your child has missed 30 out of 36 days, acting out in class or hallway, or failing multiple classes.”
- Trouble with the law; stealing, fighting, vandalism.
- Substance abuse; starting to use or increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Suicidal threats in the form of direct and indirect statements. Looking for a way to kill themselves; such as searching online for ways to commit suicide or to buy a gun.
- Suicide notes and plans, writing very dark or sad things. Preoccupation with death
- Prior suicidal behavior and/or attempts.
- Making final arrangements ( making funeral arrangements, writing a will, giving away prized possessions).

### SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

Here is what you can do

- Talk to your child about suicide, don’t be afraid, you will not be “putting ideas into their heads.”
- Ask for help. Asking for help is the

single skill that will protect your child.

- Help your child to identify and connect to caring adults to talk to when they need guidance and support.
- Know the risk factors and warning signs of suicide.
- Remain calm. Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- Listen without judging. Allow for the discussion of experiences, thoughts, and feelings.
- Be prepared for expression of intense feelings. Try to understand the reasons for considering suicide without taking a position about whether or not such behavior is justified.
- Supervise constantly. Do not leave your child alone.
- Ask if your child has a plan to kill themselves, and if so, remove the means (guns, pills, rope, knives, etc).
- Take action. It is crucial to get professional help for your child and the entire family.
- Help may be found at a suicide prevention center, local mental health agency, family service agency, hospital, or through your clergy.
- Become familiar with the support services at your child’s school. Contact the appropriate persons at the school, for example, school counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, or the school social worker.