



# Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Families

## Did You Know?

- Suicide impacts youth and families regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. Transgender youth are at a higher risk for suicide.
- Suicide is preventable. Identifying and taking action to address related risk factors and warning signs are critical steps in suicide prevention.



## What Should Parents Know about Suicide Risk Factors and Warning Signs?

Pay attention to patterns that are *unusual* or *different* for your child. If you are concerned that your child's behaviors are atypical for them, it is important to seek help.

### Risk factors can include:

- Mental health conditions
- Substance use problems
- Stressful life events
- Previous trauma
- Family violence, abuse, or neglect

### Warning signs can include:

- Talking/writing/drawing/gesturing about:
  - feeling hopeless
  - killing self
  - having no reason to live
- Increased risky behaviors
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Feelings of depression/anxiety
- Concerning posts on social media

## How Can I Support My Child's Mental Health?

- Communicate openly with your child. Make it clear that their problems can be shared and their concerns will be heard.
- Identify trusted adults within your community whom your child can contact when they need help.
- Recognize that depression/anxiety requires direct intervention.
- Seek professional help and connect with resources when you detect warning signs.
- Model and encourage the use of problem-solving, stress management, and conflict resolution skills.
- Help your child develop strong relationships within your family and school community.
- Empower your child to participate in activities that foster school connectedness.
- Reach out to the student services staff at your child's school to discuss your concerns.

## What Should I Do If I Suspect My Child is Considering Suicide?

- Listen to your child and take their concerns seriously.
- Assure your child that you will do what it takes to keep them safe.
- If you are concerned about your child's immediate safety, take them to the nearest hospital emergency room, a therapist who can see them immediately, or community mental health agency.
- Discuss concerns with the school counselor or school psychologist.
- When in doubt, contact a resource below:

## Community Resources

### Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741  
[crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

### Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center

410-531-6677 (Available 24/7)  
[grassrootscrisis.org](http://grassrootscrisis.org)

### Howard County Bureau of Behavioral Health

410-313-6202  
[howardcountymd.gov/gethelp](http://howardcountymd.gov/gethelp)

### Howard County Public School System

Mental Health and Wellness  
[hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness](http://hcpss.org/supports/mental-health-wellness)

### Maryland Crisis Connect Line

Call 211 and select option 1  
Text zip code to 898-211  
[211md.org](http://211md.org)

### Maryland Youth Crisis Hotline

1-800-422-0009 (Available 24/7)  
[help4mdyouth.org/how-we-help](http://help4mdyouth.org/how-we-help)

### NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

410-772-9300  
[nami.org](http://nami.org)

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255  
[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### Network of Care

[howard.md.networkofcare.org/mh](http://howard.md.networkofcare.org/mh)