

# TEEN SUICIDE

WARNING SIGNS & RISK FACTORS



# Table of Contents:

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>What Causes Teens to Commit Suicide</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mental Health Problems in Teens</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Depression</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Is My Teen at Risk for Suicide</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Warning Signs of Teen Suicide</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Teen Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Treatment &amp; Suicide Prevention</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Article Resources</b>	<b>7</b>

# Introduction

Teen suicide is a tragic epidemic. According to the American Psychological Association, suicide in teens is the second-leading cause of death among young people (ages 15-24 years old). Kids Health cites that for every 1 suicide 25 attempts have been made. The Jason Foundation states that every day there are an average of 5,240 attempts of teen suicide by students in grades 7-12.

The impact of teen suicide is felt throughout entire communities. Family, friends, community members, pastors, and peers are all left in shock, sadness, or wondering if there was something that they could have done to prevent such a course of action.

Whether a child feels overwhelmed, hopeless, frustrated, hurt, or unloved, suicide may seem like an answer to their pain and hurt. There are a number of complex reasons a teenager may choose to end their life.

## What Causes Teens to Commit Suicide

What would cause a teenager to decide to take their own life? There are a variety of complex factors that go into a teenager making such a lasting and tragic decision.

## Mental Health Problems in Teens

Young people and teenagers suffering from mental health issues and disorders may be more likely to contemplate or commit suicide. Disorders such as [anxiety disorder](#), [depression](#), [bipolar disorder](#), or [insomnia](#) may increase suicidal thoughts in teens.

## Depression

Family Doctor cites depression as one of the major causes of suicide. Depression is a condition that affects the chemicals within the brain. This condition causes teens to have negative thoughts and emotions. In fact, depression can completely alter a teens thoughts, feelings, and ultimately choices. A teen may feel as if there is no hope, and that they will never be happy again.

Depression can be caused by a mix of factors in the lives of a teen. Typically, events that are hard to deal with can cause depression, leading to suicidal thoughts. Another factor includes genetics. Some teens may be more at risk than others to depression.

Some additional factors that may lead to depression include:

- Death in the Family
- Death of a Friend/Peer
- Break ups
- Moving

- [Bullying](#)
- Illness
- Trouble in School
- Low Self Esteem
- Family History of Mental Health Issues

## Is My Teen at Risk for Suicide?

There are risk factors in teens that can increase the risk of suicide. These risk factors include:

- Psychological Disorders (Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety, etc.) – Kids Health cites that 95% of people who die by suicide have a psychological disorder at the time of death
- [Alcohol](#) or [Drug Use](#)
- Feelings of Distress, Irritability, Agitation
- Feels of Hopelessness or Worthlessness
- A Previous Suicide Attempt
- Family History of Mental Disorder (Particularly depression)
- Family History of Suicide
- Victim of Abuse (Physical, Emotional, Sexual)
- Lack of Support Network
- Poor Relationship with Parents
- Poor Relationship with Peers and Others
- Social Isolation
- Sexual Questioning

## Warning Signs of Teen Suicide

No parent wants to think of their teen as depressed or contemplating suicide. Because suicide or suicide attempts can be a call for help, or are an attempt to escape inner distress, teens will often keep their thoughts and emotions hidden. Whether out of shame, guilt, or thinking that they are not worth it, teenagers may not express their desire for escape through suicide. Sometimes suicide is contemplated, but other times it is impulsive. Teenagers may act out to a negative or traumatic event by choosing to commit or attempt suicide.

The act of suicide in teenagers frequently takes place after an event that puts stress on their life. This event could be a breakup, conflict, death of a loved one, divorce, bullying, etc.

The Jason Foundation suggests that four out of five teens who attempt suicide will have given clear warning signs. Warning signs that a teen may be thinking about suicide include:

- Talk about Suicide or Death
- Hinting that They Won't be Around Much Longer
- Feelings of Hopelessness
- Feelings of Extreme Guilt
- Distancing Themselves from Loved Ones
- Writing About Death, Separation or Loss: this could include poems, songs, letters, etc.

- Giving Away Treasured Possessions
- Loss of Desire for Loved Activities
- Lack of Concentration
- Changes in Eating Habits
- Varying Sleeping Habits
- Risk-Taking
- Lack of Interest in School
- Change in Personality
- Fear of Losing Control
- Low Self-Esteem
- Lack of Concern for the Future

## Teen Suicide Prevention

There are things that parents can do to protect their teens from suicide. Some measures parents can take in order to offer support and protection to their teenager include:

- **Routine Evaluations.** Ensure that if your teen does have any type of mental health disorder or issue that you and your teen are aware of it. This could include [depression](#), [anxiety](#), [bipolar disorder](#), etc. Realizing a teenager may have a disorder is important, as it will help the teen (and the family) better understand the feelings and thoughts they are having. It can also help the teen seek more effective treatment for the disorder.
- **Communication.** It is important to communicate your love and support to your teen. Let your teen know that you are always available, and that they can come to you with any problem they may have. Make them aware that you want to hear about their lives, even if they have done something to get in trouble.
- **Support.** Offer support for your teen, especially as they deal with depression or thoughts of suicide. Instruct your teen on getting support and help for the issues they are facing. Include doctors, family, friends, pastors, teachers, etc. in the health and wellbeing of your teen. Surround your teen with positive role models that support, love and encourage your teen's healthy growth.
- **Confidence.** Many teens struggling with depression or exhibiting warning signs of suicide have very low self-esteem. Reaffirm your teen's worth. Teach them healthy coping skills for handling negative events such as conflict, [peer pressure](#), bullying, etc.

Unfortunately, your teen may experience the effects of suicide. Even teens who do not themselves contemplate, attempt, or commit suicide may know or be close to someone who does. Be prepared to talk to your teen about the situation. They will experience a plethora of emotions like anger, grief, confusion and sadness. If needed, consult a doctor or counselor to help your teen cope with their loss.

# Treatment & Suicide Prevention

While teens may not wish to seek help for their depression, suicidal thoughts or actions, treatment is often required to truly help your teen. Recommended treatment includes seeing a doctor, counselor, or enrolling in a residential treatment facility.

When developing a treatment plan for your teen there are a variety of factors that should be considered. These factors include:

- The Teens Suicidal Symptoms
- The Seriousness of Threat of Suicide
- The Risk of Future Suicidal Behavior
- The Overall Health and Medical History of the Teen
- The Teen's Tolerance for Medical Procedures

If a teenager has attempted suicide, a physical health examination, as well as a mental health assessment is recommended. First, the teenager should undergo a physical examination, as they have put themselves at physical risk of harm. A mental evaluation will proceed after the physical evaluation, taking into consideration the teen's life up to the point of the suicide attempt. This evaluation will also include a look at the home situation and family life of the teen.

Common treatments for teens that have attempted suicide include: Individual Counseling, Family Counseling and Hospitalization. Individual counseling will assist the teen in getting to the root cause of the issue that led to their suicidal thoughts or actions. Family counseling is also implemented in order to harbor a safe, secure and supportive environment for the teen. In extreme cases, hospitalization occurs in order to supervise the teen and guard against physical harm.

When choosing a residential treatment center, it is important to also take into account your child's future. Finding a treatment center that doesn't require a choice between treatment and your child's education can be incredibly important. Shepherds Hill Academy is a [Residential Therapeutic Program](#) with a [fully Accredited Academy](#). Your child will not only receive the psychological counseling and therapy they need in order to heal, but will also receive individualized mentorship and academic attention in order to maintain their education

Many teenagers dealing with suicidal thoughts and actions are falling behind in school. Their emotions are overwhelming, causing them to be apathetic about their studies and future. At Shepherds Hill Academy we work with you and your teen to set goals for achievement and success. Our strict 5:1 student to staff ratio ensures your teen gets the attention they need in order to remain on track and succeed. In fact, 80% of teens that graduate high school from Shepherds Hill Academy go on to pursue post-secondary degrees.

The [therapeutic facet](#) of the program at Shepherds Hill Academy includes individual therapy, group therapy and [equine therapy](#). Our trained and certified counselors and therapists work to meet the individual goals of each teen. Our team is invested in the healing and success of your teen.

Shepherds Hill Academy incorporates both Individual and Family counseling into the program for teens; particularly those with suicidal actions and ideations.

Shepherds Hill Academy also includes a wilderness component. During the 12-month program your teen will live in a rustic environment (100% separate boys' or girls' campus) removing them from the negative effects of digital media, popular culture, and peer pressure. This environment will also help your teen learn new skills in order to build self-confidence, character, and set themselves up for a successful future.

For more information about how Shepherds Hill Academy can help your teen, give us a call or [inquire online](#) today.

**Seek immediate help in the event of any threat of suicide. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255). If you or your teen are experiencing an immediate emergency, please call 9-1-1.**

## Article Resources:

- American Psychological Association, Teen Suicide is Preventable, Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/research/action/suicide.aspx> familydoctor.org editorial staff, April 27, 2017, Teen Suicide, Retrieved from: <https://familydoctor.org/teen-suicide/>
- Lyness, D'Arcy, August 2015, About Teen Suicide, Retrieved from: <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/suicide.html#>
- Youth Suicide Statistics, June 22, 2017, Parent Resource Program, Retrieved from: <http://jasonfoundation.com/prp/facts/youth-suicide-statistics/>