

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

- Suicide is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death for children between the ages of 15-24.
- Students who have been directly impacted by suicide are 6 times more likely to die from suicide.
- All suicide threats need to be taken seriously. Students who make suicidal comments are crying out for help. **Suicidal threats and suicidal ideation are not about attention seeking.**

### Warning Signs of Suicide

- Complaints of feeling bad or awful inside
- Direct statements (verbal or written) about suicide: "I want to die" or "I am going to kill myself"
- Indirect or subtle statements (written or verbal) including a wish to die, hopelessness and helplessness: "I want to go to sleep and never wake up" or "I should have never been born"
- Statements related to not being a good person or being a burden to others
- Prior suicide attempts or self-injury behaviors
- Family history of suicide
- Giving away prized possessions, saying final good-byes, making final arrangements
- Sudden changes in personality
- Extreme moodiness (especially sadness and depression)
- Sudden changes in sleeping habits or eating patterns
- A stressful life event (death of a loved one, financial stressors, failing grades, divorce, etc)
- Deteriorated schoolwork and drop in grades
- Increase in absenteeism without reasonable explanation
- Unusual or disruptive behavior.
- Marked withdrawal from social contacts, isolation
- Become unreasonable or unrealistic
- Loss of pleasure in normal activities, previous hobbies and sports
- Engaging in risk-taking behaviors
- Running away from home
- Drug and/or alcohol use
- **Sometimes they don't say it. They just do something out of the ordinary. PAY ATTENTION. They are letting you know the best way they know how that they are struggling coping with frustrating life circumstances.**

### Some Possible Risk Factors:

- Death of a loved one (family member, friend, pet)
- Family history of suicide
- Some form of loss whether it be loss of finances, housing, ability, electricity, food, a relationship, etc
- Academic stressors
- Financial Stressors
- Bullying
- Peer pressure
- Failing grades, retention

- Stress about getting into college or how college will be paid for
- Parental divorce
- Rejection from peers or a loved one
- Domestic violence and any form of abuse
- Striving for perfection or habits of over achieving
- Sexual identity (Whether someone identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or questioning).
- Life changes (moving, changing schools, etc)

#### DON'T:

- **Don't** Panic
- **Don't** Promise secrecy or confidentiality
- **Don't** Under react or minimize
- **Don't** Act like their thoughts and feelings are not valid
- **Don't** Debate with them
- **Don't** Rush or lose patience
- **Don't** Act shocked
- **Don't** Be judgmental
- **Don't** Preach to them or try to rationalize with them. Suicidal students are not thinking rationally, so trying to rationalize with them will cause them to feel that you are minimizing their struggles
- **Don't** Leave them alone

#### What to do

- Take all threats (written or verbal seriously). An increasing number of students are expressing suicidal thoughts and ideation by means of texting, emailing, face book, twitter, Vine, etc.
- Stay calm and be patient
- Show that you care
- Contact your suicide designee. Reach out to support staff such as guidance counselors, family counselors, social workers, psychologists, school resource officer
- Suicide designee and/or other support staff will assess the student for plan, intent, and lethality. Suicide designee and/or support staff will contact the YES team (Youth Emergency Services) or designated SRO and the student will be Baker Acted if deemed necessary.

#### Resources

- Henderson Mental Health Center: 954-677-3113. Provides: Crisis Team- initiates the Baker Act process, Youth Emergency Services (provides immediate emergency therapeutic services to children and their families)
- 2-1-1 Broward (formally First Call for Help). 954-537-0211 or just 211
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line 741741 Text Word HOME to text a national crisis counselor
- Broward County Schools Suicide Prevention Program at Arthur Ashe: 754-321-3421 or 754-321-3400

Please feel free to email me at any time with questions, comments, or concerns:

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