

Despite how it might feel, bringing up the topic doesn't push teens toward suicide; it communicates that we care enough to recognize their suffering. Most teens don't want to end their life, just their emotional pain. Teens need to know that parents have seen their despair and are committed to walking with them through this difficult time.

NOTICE THIS:

Thoughts of suicide cross the minds of many teens as they struggle to find a way out of a dreadful situation. Teens generally don't want to die - they just want the pain to end.



WATCH FOR THIS

Changes in behaviour alongside a history of previous attempts, a connection to a recent or past suicide, a sudden or unexpected loss of status, hopes or relationships, prolonged high stress, drug use or escalating self harm are all warning signs.

The absence of healthy coping skills and supportive relationships coupled with depression that hasn't gone away, increases your teen's risk.

If, after a period of deep distress, your teen seems to have suddenly become calm and settled, the danger may have increased rather than decreased. They may have moved from the desire to die to the intent to die.



SAY THIS

"I can see you're hurting. Please tell me about it."

"What can I do to help you through this difficult time? What do you need?"

"Is suicide something you are thinking about?"

"On a scale of 1-10 how much do you want to die? On a scale of 1-10 how much do you *intend* to die?"

"Do you have a plan? Would you tell me the plan? Have you collected what you need to follow through on your plan?"

• *Note: If "yes", they are in immediate danger and need protection. Remove the means, keep careful watch, take them to the E.R, and if necessary, call the police.*



TRY THIS

Speak directly, clearly and from your heart—not just your head.

Don't try to downplay their pain or explain away what they are feeling. Speak directly about the situation.

Ask them to help you understand why they want to die. Listen with compassion and without panic.

Help them explore reasons to live. Ask them to agree to not harm themselves for a set period of time while you work together on a plan for dealing with the pain.

Ask them if they would feel more comfortable speaking with another adult. With their permission, find that person and invite them in.



RESOURCES

To access all of our helpsheets online, visit youthunlimited.com/teentools

Remember:

"God is near the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."