

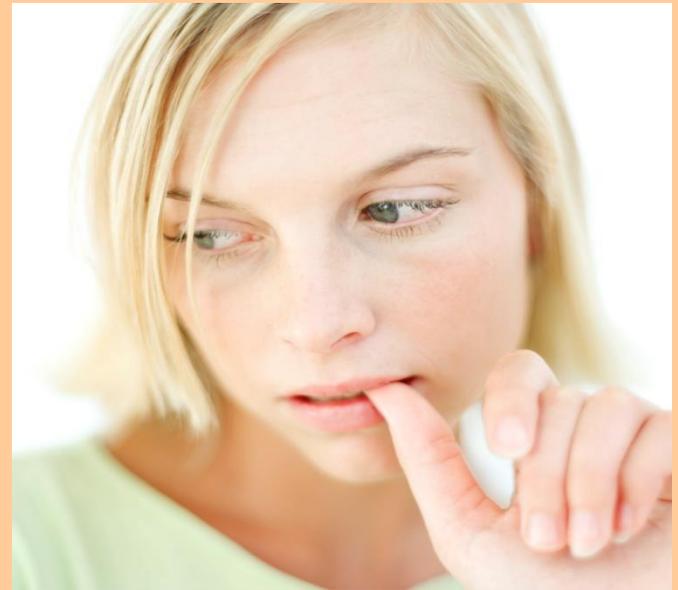
Preventing Youth Suicide

Creating Emotional Safety for our Students

School District of Volusia

Your Role Simplified:

- **Learning**
signs of risk in students
- **Identifying**
at-risk students
- **Referring**
to appropriate resources



- **Warning Signs**

- **Risk Factors**

- **Protective Factors**



Risk Factors

- Previous suicide attempt
- Feeling hopeless, different, and alienated
- Mental health disorder
- Substance abuse
- Sexual orientation
- Living alone or runaway
- Situational crises
- Life stressors
- Access to a gun



Suicide Warning Signs

behaviors that may signal suicidal thinking

- Withdrawal from friends and/or family
- Preoccupation with death
- Marked personality or mood changes
- Difficulty concentrating
- Frequent physical complaints
- Loss of interest in activities
- Restlessness, agitation, and anxiety



Late Warning Signs

- Suicide notes and plans
- Refusing help, feeling “beyond help”
- Verbal hints or direct statements such as: “I won’t be a problem for you much longer,” “Nothing matters,” “It’s no use,” “I won’t see you again,” “I wish I were dead”
- Complaining about being a bad person or feeling “rotten inside”



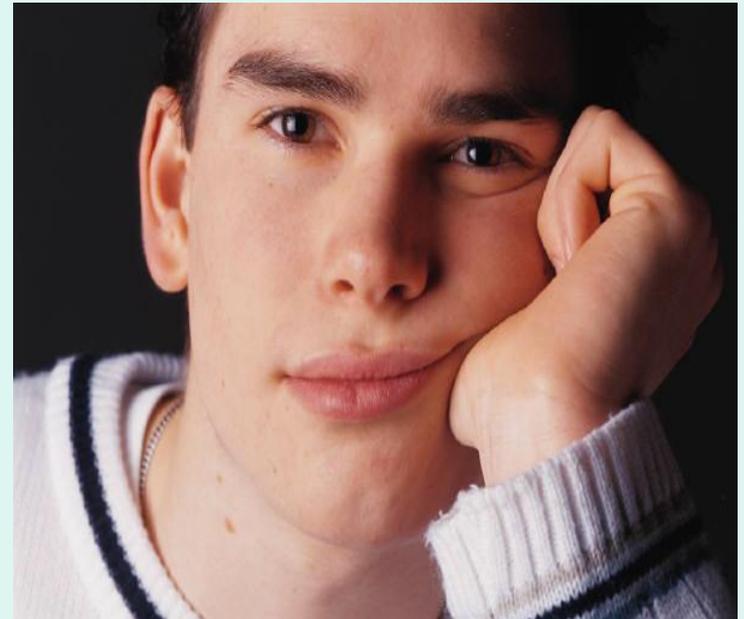
Late Warning Signs



- Violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away
- Eating and/or sleep disturbances
- Becoming suddenly cheerful after a period of depression – the student may have decided to escape all problems by ending his life
- Giving away possessions, cleaning out locker

When a student gives signs that they are considering suicide, you should:

- **Remain calm...find a private place to talk**
- **Ask the student if he is thinking about suicide in a caring and non-confrontational way**
- **Suggestion: “Sometimes when people have had your experiences or feelings they have thoughts of suicide. Is this something you are thinking about?”**
- **Listen**
- **Assure him that there is help. Say something like: “You are not alone. I will help you get the help you need.”**
- **If you cannot talk to the student in this way, find another staff member who can do this**



Parent Notification And Involvement



- **Report your concerns to the Guidance Counselor who will use the “Concern of Harm” process. This process involves parents and administration in securing help for the student**
- **Once the counselor provides information on mental health resources to the parent, the parent is responsible for getting help for the student**
- **The counselor and other identified school staff should communicate about the intervention and follow up supports for the student**

Important facts:

- **Asking someone if they are suicidal will not put the idea into their head or cause them to kill themselves**
- **Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between 15 to 24**
- **In over 80% of suicides, warning signs were given**
- **Parents, teachers, and friends are in a key position to help prevent suicide**

Protective Factors



- Close family bonds
- Strong sense of self-worth
- Good impulse control
- A reasonably stable environment
- Responsibilities to others
- Best friends
- Opportunities to participate in activities
- No access to weapons
- Access to treatment for mental and substance abuse concerns

Resources

- Guidance Counselors, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, School Nurses, School Resource Deputies and PLUS Case Workers
- School - Based Mental Health Professional
- Law Enforcement: **911** (Law Enforcement can “Baker Act” students)
- The Department of Children and Families (imminent danger and guardian refuses intervention) **1-800 - 96 - ABUSE**
- ACT Corporation Suicide Prevention Line: **1-800-539-4228**
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: **1-800-273-8255 (TALK)**
- www.suicidology.org
- www.nmha.org
- www.save.org

Post-Test

1. Two risk factors for suicide are access to a gun and substance abuse. T/ F
2. Verbal statements about suicide are late warning signs. T/ F
3. Asking someone if they are suicidal will not cause them to hurt themselves. T/ F
4. In 80% of suicides, warning signs were given. T/ F
5. If you cannot ask a student if they are suicidal, you should find someone who can do this. T/ F
6. The “Concern of Harm” procedure is used to inform parents about concerns for their child. T/ F