

# *Suicide Prevention Information*

This information is included because we all want children and young people to be safe. Prevention programs such as *Circle of Grace* primarily focuses on how to identify and seek help when abuse or boundary violations occur.

The Circle of Grace concept is to tell their trusted adults not only about potential harm from someone outside their Circle of Grace but also about self-harm. All of us strive for the safety of all children and young people from outside sources but we must recognize the real crisis of our youth considering self-harm or suicide.

Below are some facts, warning signs, questions to ask and resources. Please share them with your staff and volunteers because one life lost is too many.

## **Facts:**

- Since 1999 suicide rates have increased 24%. Suicide is now the tenth leading cause of death in the US.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among the ages 10-14 and the second leading cause of death for youth/adults ages 15-34.
- Every 13 minutes someone dies of suicide. While more females attempt suicide, males are four times more likely to die by suicide.
- 20 percent of American high school students report having seriously considered suicide during the previous 12 months.
- 8 percent of high school students make a suicide attempt.
- 70 percent of youth who make a suicide attempt frequently use alcohol and/or drugs
- Being bullied and suicide-related behavior is closely related.

## **Warning Signs:**

- Talking about or making plans for suicide
- Expressing hopelessness about the future
- Talking about being a burden
- Displaying severe or overwhelming emotional pain or distress/ mood swings
- Withdrawing from or changing social connections or situations
- Changes in sleep (increase or decrease)
- Anger or hostility that seems out of character or out of context
- Recent increase in anxiety, agitation, irritability or behaving recklessly
- Telling people good bye
- Giving away possessions
- Excessive drinking or substance abuse

### **Ask Questions:**

Ask the Question (*it is a myth that asking will give the youth the "idea" of suicide. Be sure to have suicide crisis information in hand, plenty of time to listen and a private place to visit*)

- "I have the feeling you are thinking about suicide but are having trouble bringing it up"
- "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- "Sometimes people in certain situations feel suicidal. Have you been thinking about killing yourself?"
- "Have you ever wanted to stop living?"
- "Do you have a plan to kill yourself?"
- "If so, ask how, where and if they have a means (such as gun/pills/rope or other means)?"

### **Listen, Reassure and Persuade:**

- Listen and look for warning signs/risk factors.
- Validate their feelings.
- Find out what is important to the person and why they choose to live.
- Inform them that you need to contact their parents/guardians so they can get professional help. Assure them you will help them talk to their parents.
- Remind the person that seeking help isn't a sign of weakness and treatment is available to help them feel better.
- Provide them with resources:
  - 1- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1800-273-TALK (8255))**
  - 2- **Boys Town National Hotline (1-800-448-30000, text VOICE to 20121 or [www.yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org))**

### **Take Action:**

- Don't leave youth alone once you have determined he or she is at risk.
- Contact parents/guardians and review the following:
  - 1- Need to seek professional help or call 911 if safety is an immediate issue
  - 2- Instruct the parents to remove means like guns and pills from the home
  - 3- Provide them with resources:
    - a) **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1800-273-TALK (8255))**
    - b) **Boys Town National Hotline (1-800-448-30000, text VOICE to 20121 or [www.yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://www.yourlifeyourvoice.org))**

*Remember that not seeking help for a suicidal child/youth is considered neglect. If you have concerns about the parents getting help or their child or youth you must contact the authorities.*

*Information obtained from CDC.gov and Nebraska Health and Human Service- [dhhs.ne.gov](http://dhhs.ne.gov)*