

Preventing Youth Suicide:

Tips for Parents and
Educators

Youth Death Rates

In 2007, suicide continued to be ranked as the **third leading cause of death** for young people (ages 10-24); only accidents and homicides occurred more frequently.

Youth Suicide Rates

- More than 32,000 people kill themselves each year.
 - This is the equivalent of 89 suicides per day; one suicide every 16 minutes or 11.01 suicides per 100,000 population.
 - More than 395,000 people with self-inflicted injuries are treated in emergency rooms each year.
- Each day, there are approximately 12 youth suicides.
- Every 2 hours and 11 minutes, a person under the age of 25 completes suicide.
- Each year, there are approximately 10 youth suicides for every 100,000 youth.
- Among young people aged 10-14 years, the rate has doubled in the last two decades.

(Source: www.cdc.gov/injury)

Youth Suicide Rates (cont'd)

- For every completed suicide by youth, it is estimated that 100 to 200 attempts are made.
- Based on the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey:
 - 14.5% of students had seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months.
 - 11.3% of students had made a plan about how they would attempt suicide.
 - 6.9% of students attempted one or more times during the 12 months prior to the survey (9.3% female and 4.6% male).
 - A prior suicide attempt is an important risk factor for an eventual completion.
- Firearms remain the most commonly used suicide method among youth, accounting for 49% of all completed suicides.

Research Findings

- Most adolescent suicides occur after school hours and in the teen's home.
- The typical profile of an adolescent *nonfatal* suicide attempter is a female who ingests pills, while the profile of the typical suicide completer is a male who dies from a gunshot wound.
- Most adolescent suicide attempts are precipitated by interpersonal conflicts. The intent of the behavior appears to be to effect change in the behaviors or attitudes of others.

Suicide Risk Factors

- Risk factors for suicide among the young include:
 - Suicidal thoughts.
 - Psychiatric disorders (such as depression, impulsive aggressive behavior, bipolar disorder, and certain anxiety disorders).
 - Drug and/or alcohol abuse.
 - Previous suicide attempts.
 - Family stress/dysfunction.
 - Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home.
 - Situational crises (i.e. traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, etc.)

Suicide Warning Signs

- Suicidal threats in the form of direct and indirect statements.
- Suicide notes and plans.
- Prior suicidal behavior.
- Making final arrangements (e.g. making funeral arrangements, writing a will, giving away prized possessions).
- Preoccupation with death.
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts and/or feelings.

What to Do

Youth who feel suicidal are not likely to seek help directly; however, when a youth gives signs that he or she may be considering suicide, the following actions should be taken:

- Remain clam.
- Ask the youth directly if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory.
- Listen.

What to Do (cont'd)

- Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- Do not judge.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the youth alone.
- Remove means for self-harm.
- **Get help:** School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.

Port Jervis High School

- **School Psychologist** – Noel Bushey 845-858-3100-extension 11640.
- **Guidance Counselors:**
 - Laurie Kahmar - 845-858-3100-extension 11613 (*A to D*)
 - Julie Balogh - 845-858-3100-extension 11611 (*E to L*)
 - Alex Danon - 845-858-3100-extension 11612 (*M to Saz*)
 - Kate Oldham - 845-858-3100-extension 11610 (*Sca to Z*)
 - Julie Nimal - 845-858-3100-extension 11614 (*Special Education*)
- **School Social Worker** – Diane Furst – 845-858-3100-extension 11645

Port Jervis Middle School

- **School Psychologist:** Jody Hanlon - 845-858-3100-extension 12640
- **Guidance Counselors:**
 - Anthony Caporale – 845-858-3100-extension 12611 (A – L)
 - Bethany Mortenson – 845-858-3100-extension 12612 (M - Z)
- **School Social Workers:**
 - Erin Lehn – 845-858-3100-extension 12645
 - Diane Burns-Dobson 845-858-3100-extension 16507 Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Elementary Schools

Anna S. Kuhl Elementary School

- **School Psychologist:** Shannon Johnson – 845-858-3100-extension 13640
- **Guidance Counselor:** Erin Bratton - 858-3100-extension 13611

Hamilton-Bicentennial Elementary School

- **School Psychologist:** Vicky Harris - 845-858-3100-extension 14640
- **Guidance Counselor:** Dawn Jones - 845-858-3100-extension 14610
- **School Social Worker:** Diane Burns-Dobson – 845-858-3100-extension 14645 Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Community Support and Direction

- **Helpline 1-800-832-1200** is a 24/7 hotline offered by the Mental Health Association in Orange County, Inc. that provides crisis intervention, information and referrals.
- **Mobile Mental Health Team (MMHT)**
1-888-750-2266 provides help to individuals and families experiencing an emotional or situational crisis. The MMHT is available to provide phone and outreach 24/7.

Community Support and Direction (cont'd)

- Dial **211** it is a free, confidential, health and human service multi-lingual, information and referral telephone service.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK.
- Mental Health Clinics for children, adolescents & families:
 - Child and Family Clinic (Newburgh) 845-568-5260
 - Port Jervis Mental Health Clinic 845-858-1456
 - Occupations (various locations) 1-888-750-2266
 - Arden Hill Hospital, Behavioral Health 845-294-7931

Community Support and Direction (cont'd)

- Local Hospitals that provide crisis evaluation and emergency room services:
 - Arden Hill Hospital/ORMC 845-294-2265
 - Bon Secours Hospital 845-858-7121
 - Cornwall Hospital 84-534-7711, ext. 4601
 - Horton Hospital 342-7100
- However, anyone that is suicidal can present at any hospital in the county.