

# Suicidal Ideations

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*YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE!*

***BE A HERO!***

# Recognizing Pre-Suicidal/Suicidal *Behavioral Cues*

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- Any sudden or unexpected changes in behavior or personality.
- Homework quality declines and grades drop.
- Daydreaming and inability to concentrate may be evident.
- Persistent boredom. Lack of energy.
- Withdrawal. The student may begin isolating him/herself from peer activities and associations.
- Loss of interest in previously pleasurable activities.
- Prevailing sadness. Crying.
- Changes in sleep and eating habits.
- Unusual neglect of personal appearance. o Inability to tolerate praise or rewards.
- An easygoing student may become “touchy” or “irritable.”
- Violent or rebellious behaviors may occur. The student may become reckless, restless, defiant, or physically aggressive.
- Unexplained absences from school

# Recognizing Pre-Suicidal/Suicidal *Behavioral Cues Cont.*

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- Drug and/or alcohol abuse may be evident.
- Pursues risk or thrill-seeking stimulation.
- Runs away from home.
- A withdrawn person may become outgoing and cooperative, due to a sense of relief after reaching the conclusion to commit suicide.
- Prized possessions are given away.
- Collects pills, razor blades, knives, ropes, or firearms. Accident prone.
- Sudden mood swings.
- Self-destructing or self-mutilating acts.
- Insufficient problem-solving skills.
- Student suffers from depression, as well as other disorders, such as conduct disorder, schizophrenia, and panic disorder.

# Recognizing Pre-Suicidal/Suicidal

## *Verbal Cues*

- Preoccupation with talking or writing about death.  
Talk about committing suicide.
- Verbal or written remarks about sense of failure, worthlessness, and/or isolation.
- Frequent complaints about physical symptoms that are often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, or fatigue.



# Recognizing Pre-Suicidal/Suicidal *Situational Cues*

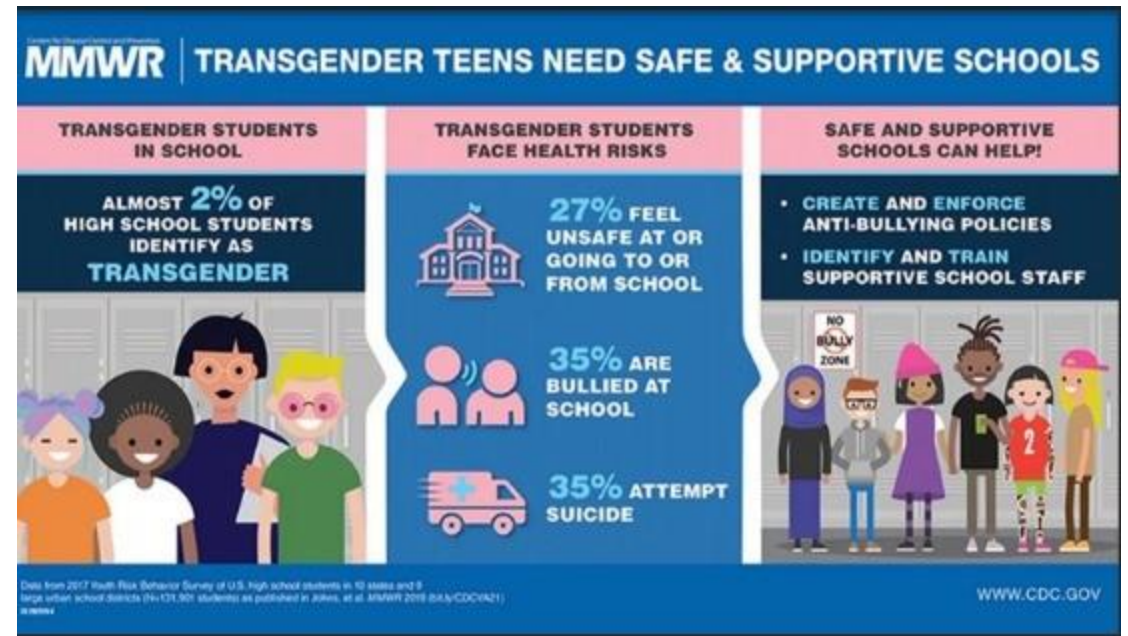
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- Loss of a relationship or personal relationship problems.
- Death of a friend or family member, especially from suicide.
- Loss of self-esteem. School failure. Failure to achieve expectations.
- Family disharmony, such as divorce of parents or alcohol abuse.
- Family history of psychiatric difficulties or suicidal behavior
- Experiencing a major life event or chronic stressor.
- Rootlessness and family mobility.
- Serious physical illness.
- Physical and sexual abuse.
- Mental problems. Previous suicide attempts.
- Student is rejected by peers and/or lacks social support.

# Recognizing Pre-Suicidal/Suicidal

## *Other factors to consider*

- Gender: Men commit suicide successfully 4.5 times more often than women, but women attempt suicide 2-4 times more than men.
- Ethnicity: African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and Asian-Americans have lower rates than Euro-Americans. However, Native Americans have rates 1.6-4.2 times the national average.
- Sexual orientation: Homosexual/Transgender teens are three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual teens.
- Previous suicide attempts: Of all completed suicides, 10-40% have previously attempted suicide.



# Teacher/Staff

How to react appropriately in this high intensity situation/ BE a GOOD listener!

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## WHEN THE STUDENT CONFIDE IN YOU

- **Be prepared to drop everything to take time to deal with the situation.** Take every complaint and feeling the child expresses seriously. Do not attempt to minimize the problem by telling him/her everything they have to live for. This will only increase feelings of guilt and hopelessness.
- **Be calm, supportive, and nonjudgmental.** Listen actively and encourage self-disclosure. Assure the student that he or she is going the right thing by confiding in you. **NEVER disregard the student's feelings.**
- **Do not express discomfort with the situation.** Your willingness to discuss it will show the person that you do not condemn him or her for having such feelings.
- **Stay with the student, do not allow the student to go to the bathroom or to drink water. Keep the student with you at all times.** Call the School Counselor (First choice) or the Administrator (If the School Counselor is not available) **immediately.** Never leave him/her alone until the School Counselor/Administrator arrives.

## WHEN YOU HEAR/OBSERVE

- You can spot a drawing/painting that may convey the idea of suicide/self-harm/distress.
- You may hear a conversation among peers that sounds like suicide/self-harm/distress.
- You may see a student browsing the Internet with words such as: suicide, how to commit suicide, pills, cutting, alcohol....
- **If possible, you can obtain the drawing/painting, or talk to the student directly about what you heard/observed.**
- **FOLLOW** the same procedures as when a student confide in you, **report the situation immediately**, do not wait, do not leave the student alone.

Remember that as a teacher, you are not a trained therapist.

Your more immediate job is to serve as a referral agent to help the student get the services they need.

- ✓ Immediately after the School Counselor/Administrator picks up the student from your class, send us a detailed email narrating the incident.
- ✓ If the student has revealed to you that Child Abuse has been present, please report it to CPS, you have ONLY 48 hours to report.
- ✓ If you have any evidence, please turn it in as soon as we pick up the student.



# Teacher/Staff

## ACTIONS TO AVOID

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- *Do not promise* anything that cannot be delivered. This is a situation where it is never appropriate to promise confidentiality.
- *Do not ignore* or lessen a student's suicidal threat.
- *Try to avoid sounding shocked* at a student's suicidal thoughts. Do not stress the shock, embarrassment, or pain that the suicide may cause their family before you are certain that is not exactly what the student hopes to accomplish.
- *Don't moralize.*
- *Do not argue* with a student who may be suicidal. You may not only lose the debate, but also the person. Don't criticize, ridicule, or infer that the person is crazy.
- *Do not tell students in this situation that you "know how they feel"* or relate personal stories.
- *Do not* be concerned by long periods of silence. Allow the student time to think.
- *Do not ignore* your own intuitions about a student's behavior or changes.
- *Do not try to handle the situation alone.*
- *Do not attempt in-depth counseling.* Contact a professional to provide more extensive counseling.

YOU CAN SAVE A  
LIFE TODAY!