



## **ASK ABOUT SUICIDE: To Save A Life**

**ASK** about suicide  
**SEEK** more information and keep safe  
**KNOW** where and how to refer

*Offer hope to prevent a tragic loss of life.*

### **Suicide in Texas**

- About 2,500 suicide deaths in Texas a year – 1 ½ times more suicide than homicides, averaging almost 7 a day
- 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among young adults (25-34 years)
- Although there is no one cause, 90% of those who die by suicide have an underlying mental health or substance abuse condition. It affects nearly 20% of those with bipolar disorder and 15% of those with schizophrenia.

### **What do we know about suicide?**

- More males die by suicide and more females attempt
- Highest self-reported attempts are Latina females
- Highest death rate is white males
- African-American females have some of the lowest suicide death rates  
*(Data from suicidology.org, WISQARS, and <http://soupfintdh.state.tx.us/cgi-bin/death>)*

### **Suicide is considered to be one of the most preventable deaths**

#### **Risk Factors: mental and addictive disorders, social-cultural, environmental**

- Mental and addictive disorders, often co-occurring, are the greatest risk factors for suicide, with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia having the strongest association with suicidal behavior
- Loss of job, financial, relationship, easy access to lethal means, exposure to clusters of suicide

#### **Protective Factors can act as a safety net**

Protective factors are positive conditions, personal and social resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential for suicide as well as other high risk factors.

#### **Acute Risk – take immediate action**

Acute or high degree of risk – those with direct suicidal communication or behavior

#### **Other warning signs – chronic or moderate risk**

- Feelings: No reason for living. Feeling trapped. Hopelessness. Dramatic mood changes (high or low). Anxiety or agitation.

1-800-273-8255 National Lifeline number. Please put this in your cell phone for an emergency.

- Behavior: Increased substance abuse. Withdrawal from friends/family/society. Rage/anger/revenge. Reckless or risky activities. Unable to sleep or sleep all the time.

### What can you do when you hear suicidal language or behavior?

1. **ASK about suicide**
2. **Seek more information and keep safe**
3. **Know where and how to refer (take action)**

### ASK about suicide

- Indirect - Sometimes when people are sad, as you are, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it? Do you want to go to bed and never wake up?
- Direct - Have you thought about suicide? Do you want to kill yourself? Are you thinking about suicide?
- **Always ASK – it is the most important step. If you cannot do it, find someone who can.**
- Do not make judgmental remarks or inferences – people will just stop talking to you.

### Seek more information

- Seek a private area to talk. Seek to establish a relationship. Comment on what you see and observe non-judgmentally. Be curious about their perceived problem, find out how long they've thought about suicide, if they've attempted suicide in the past and if they tried to get help.
- Seek to find out if they are at immediate high risk of suicide (have a plan) (rehearsing it in their mind) and/or (have a gun, access to pills or other means.) Take immediate steps to limit access to means and assure safety if needed. Be sure to be aware of your own non-verbal reactions and tone of voice.
- Help ensure the person's safety and/or help them start to implement a safety plan – a list of people they can call when feeling suicidal. Find out who and where they normally go to for help (family, friends, pastor, neighbor, roommate, girl/boy friend). Find out if they have a regular doctor, mental health provider or counselor.
- With immediate risk of suicide call 911 or get the person to the nearest hospital emergency room

### Know how and where to refer

- Know where to refer nationally, in Texas and in your area, your school or your community
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255. Save this number to save a life.
- Texas Crisis Line Options - All MHMRs/LMHAs in Texas are required to provide a 24-hour crisis line for their service area (which may be a county or a region of counties) and these lines are required to be certified by the American Association of Suicidology. To find the number to the MHMR crisis line closest to you, log onto the DSHS website, [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us), under Reference Center.
- Other Local resources – 911, hospitals, law enforcement, mobile outreach crisis teams
- For an immediate risk call 911, your local or campus police or sheriff, or take the person to the nearest hospital.

*Developed by Merily H. Keller, [hodgekeller@yahoo.com](mailto:hodgekeller@yahoo.com) with contributions from Lloyd Potter, PhD, MPH, University of Texas at San Antonio, John Hellsten, PhD, Texas DSHS Injury Epidemiology and EMS Trauma Registry Group and Jennifer Battle, MSW, MHMRA of Harris County HelpLine Director. Review & assistance from Texas Suicide Prevention Council*

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