Teen Suicide

Preventing Tragedy
Suicide and Teenagers

Some teenagers feel so much pain and so little hope that ending their life seems like the only choice. Any suicide is a painful and shocking experience for friends, family, and the community — certainly more so when it is a young person. But there is hope. Suicide is preventable. The first step is reaching out for help.

Facts about Teen Suicide

**FACT** Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for 10–24-year-old youth

**FACT** 4,600 young people die from suicide each year

**FACT** Four times as many boys die from suicide than girls

**FACT** About 1 in 6 high school students think about killing themselves
Kids at Risk

- History of suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide
- History of depression or other mental illness
- Alcohol or drug use/abuse
- Stressful life event or loss
- Struggling with sexual orientation
- Easy access to deadly methods
- Awareness of suicidal behavior in others
- Imprisonment
- History of child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence
- Lack of problem-solving skills
- Sexual minority youth
Warning Signs

- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Feeling hopeless and/or being depressed
- Feeling helpless, as if no one understands or can help
- Sleeping more or less than normal
- Increased use of drugs and alcohol
- Running away from home or trouble with the police
- Isolating; avoiding friends and family
- No longer enjoying activities
- Anger or aggression that seems out of character
- Increasingly stressed or short-tempered
What You Can Do

**TIP** Listen, but do not judge when your child talks.

**TIP** Ask your teen/tween if they are thinking about killing themselves or feel like they want to die. Talking about it is the first step to getting help and feeling better.

**TIP** Show and tell them that you care about them.

**TIP** Stay with them until you can get help. If you need to leave to get help, have someone you trust stay with them in a safe place.

**TIP** Put away medications, sharp objects, and especially guns.

**TIP** If you are afraid that they are going to hurt themselves right away, call 911.

*Adapted from www.samhsa.gov/suicide-prevention*
Where to Find Help

If you or someone you know needs help:

▶ Massachusetts Emergency Services Programs at (877) 382-1609

▶ The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

▶ Samaritans Statewide Hotline call or text 24/7 to (877) 870-4673

▶ Call2Talk at (508) 532-2255 or text C2T to 741741

▶ The Trevor Hotline for LGBTQ youth at 866-4-U-TREVOR ((866) 488-7386)

▶ Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention at (617) 297–8774

▶ American Foundation for Suicide Prevention www.afsp.org/i-am/worried-about-someone

▶ Massachusetts Department of Public Health www.mass.gov/dph/suicideprevention

▶ American Association of Suicidology www.suicidology.org