

PRINT-CUT-SAVE

HOW CAN I HELP A FRIEND WHO IS HURTING?

LISTEN
Let your friend tell you his situation and his feelings. Don't give advice or feel obliged to find simple solutions. LISTEN and try to imagine how you would feel in his place.

BE HONEST
If your friend's words or actions scare you, tell her. If you're worried or don't know what to do, say so.

SHARE FEELINGS
At times everyone feels sad, hurt or hopeless. You know what that's like - share your feelings. Let your friend know he's not alone.

GET HELP
Take suicide threats seriously. If you keep this secret you may lose your friend. Perhaps you and your friend can think of a helpful adult she would like to talk to. If not, talk to someone yourself.

Your friend turned to you because you could be trusted to help. You CAN help, but not alone.

WHAT IF I'M THE ONE WHO IS HURTING?
A good start is to talk to a friend. But don't stop there. Talk to an adult who you know and trust - a parent, a school counselor, your teacher, school counselor, you say, "They won't understand." Well, you just might be surprised. Also, your school or community you can call or drop in.

NEVER SURRENDER ON LIFE!!!

Crisis Support Services of Alameda County
1-800-398-2131
24 Hour Crisis Line

If you don't know what you have from the first person you talk to then talk to someone else. Remember, it's better to have one open ending door.

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WHEN IT HURTS TO LIVE

Unless you have been living in outer space, you know that there has been an alarming increase in the number of teenage suicides and suicide attempts. Most frequently, it is friends and classmates like you that know of a troubled teenager even before parents and school staff.

If you or a friend feel troubled, depressed, lonely, sad, and hopeless if you or they begin thinking that life is not worth living... then this card is for you!

NEVER SURRENDER

TEENAGE SUICIDE MYTHS AND FACTS

Myth: "Teenage suicide and attempts are rare."
In the United States suicide is the number two cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 to 25 years. In addition, thousands of attempts are made each year. Anyway, don't you think one suicide or suicide attempt is too many?

Myth: "People who talk about suicide won't kill themselves."
Although most people who threaten suicide will not do it, eight out of ten people who commit suicide gave warnings or actually threatened suicide. Always take any reference to suicide as a serious warning sign. Certainly a person who talks about suicide is hurting and deserves to be taken seriously.

Myth: "Most young people who attempt suicide really want to die."
What they really would like is for their life or some part of their life to be different. Losing the hope that their life will ever change, they consider suicide. Suicidal people are undecided about living or dying so they gamble with death leaving it to others to save them.

Myth: "Talking about suicide will encourage a person to do it."
You still don't believe this myth do you? Everyone knows that an open and honest discussion is not going to push someone over the edge. In fact, suicidal people are desperate to talk with someone who will be genuinely concerned and non judgemental.

WARNING SIGNS

There is no exact formula or checklist. However, any one or combination of the following signs warrants our attention.

- Threats of suicide; desire to end it all
- Feeling trapped, hopeless, or deeply depressed.
- Change in mood (irritability, poor attention).
- Feelings of worthlessness.
- Extreme changes in behavior; very withdrawn or becomes reckless.
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities.
- Giving away favorite possessions.
- Drug involvement, including alcohol.
- Drop in school grades.
- Change in eating or sleeping habits.
- Loss of loved one through death, divorce, or love relationship.
- School discipline problems or legal problems.

SO, WHAT NOW?
If this information makes you think of yourself or someone you know then consider this line from the popular song "Never Surrender" by Corey Hart.
*"Just a little more time is all we're asking for.
Cause just a little more time could open closing doors."
... NEVER SURRENDER"*

That's right, it takes time to heal hurts, solve problems, mend relationships. Although it may feel permanent, what you, or your friend, are going through is temporary.

Though life may not seem worth living at the moment it will, give it more time. As it is right now, time is on your side. But you may need help...

* Lyrics used with permission. © 1985 Lindee Pub. Co.