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INSPIRING EMOTIONAL WISDOM

Helpful Resources

If your loved one has attempted suicide or self-harmed

When a loved one has made an attempt

- **Acknowledge your own feelings.** When someone you love attempts to take their life, it can evoke strong emotions. You may feel angry, sad, or afraid. You may be anxious about your loved one's future. You may feel as though you, yourself, have experienced trauma. You must seek support and take steps to care for yourself.

- **Recovery is a process.** "My loved one is home from the hospital. Does that mean they are better?" Encourage your loved one to stay in counseling and to communicate any thoughts of suicide to their treatment provider. Be patient and gentle. Don't be discouraged by what may seem like setbacks or slow progress. The recovery process is different for everyone. Recovery usually extends long beyond hospitalization and will involve support from professionals, friends, and family. The first six months after hospitalization are especially critical to the suicide attempt survivor's recovery, and the risk for suicide remains elevated for the entire first year.

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- **Be with them.** One of the most powerful gifts you can provide at this time is your presence. Be there with them even when you don't know what to say. For the first few weeks, they need you very close. Face-to-face is best, but there are many ways to connect with technology – Skype, phone, text, and social media. During their crisis, your loved one may have perceived themselves as entirely alone or a burden on you and the others who love them.

- **A plan for recovery.** Talk openly with your loved one. Ask your loved one what they need, and help them create a good plan for their recovery.

How can you help your loved one after a suicide attempt

- Encourage your loved one to discuss developing a safety plan with their therapist/counselor. We recommend the Stanley Brown Crisis Plan.
- Please encourage your loved one to engage in healthy eating, exercise, and regular sleep.
- Help identify ways to support their recovery, such as reducing their workload, allowing others to help them with daily responsibilities, socializing with supportive people, reminding your loved one of the many reasons to live, learning problem solving and coping skills and a sense of responsibility.
- Please encourage them to engage in self-care and relaxation activities, such as meditation, time in nature, and listening to music that helps their mood.
- Ask the provider how you can help make their environment safer and take action to reduce access to means, such as removing or safely storing firearms and medications.
- And most importantly, make sure you are practicing self-care and taking care of yourself.

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Know the Warning Signs

Some warning signs may help you determine if a loved one is at risk for suicide, especially if the behavior is new, has increased, or seems related to a painful event, loss, or change. If you or someone you know exhibits any of these, seek help by calling 988.

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Extreme mood swings

Myths and facts of Suicide

MYTH

Talking about suicide or asking someone if they are suicidal is risky because it might put the idea in their head.

FACT

You don't give a suicidal person morbid ideas by talking about suicide. The opposite is true. Bringing up the subject of suicide and openly discussing suicide is one of the most helpful things you can do. It allows a suicidal person to feel understood and to feel connected.

MYTH

People who talk about suicide are not actually likely to attempt suicide.

FACT

Almost everyone who dies by suicide has given some clue or warning. Do not ignore threats of suicide. Statements like, "You'll be sorry when I'm dead" or "I can't see any way out"—even if said casually or as a joke—may indicate profound suicidal feelings.

MYTH

If a person is determined to kill themselves, there isn't much that can be done to stop them.

FACT

Even the most severely depressed person has mixed feelings about death, wavering until the last moment between wanting to live and die. Most suicidal people do not want death; they want the pain to stop. However overpowering, the impulse to end it all does not last forever.

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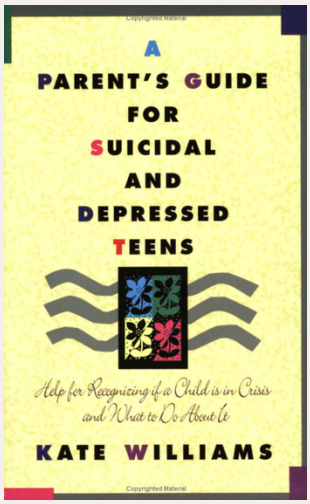
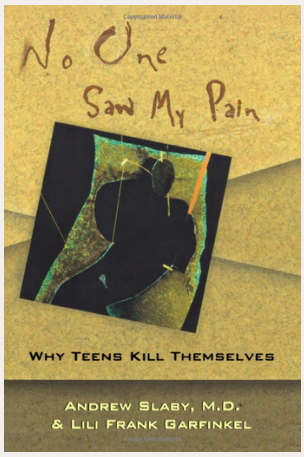
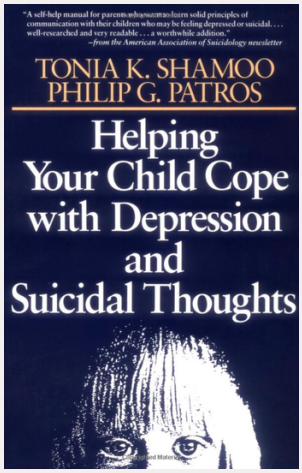
Helpful Resources



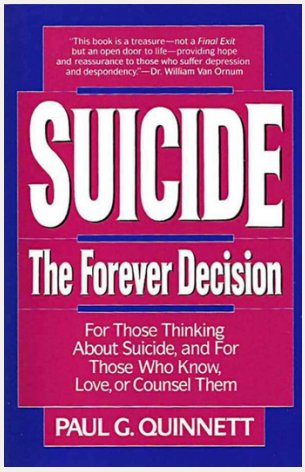
A Parent's Guide for Suicidal and Depressed Teens: Help for Recognizing if a Child is in Crisis and What to Do About It – Katie Williams



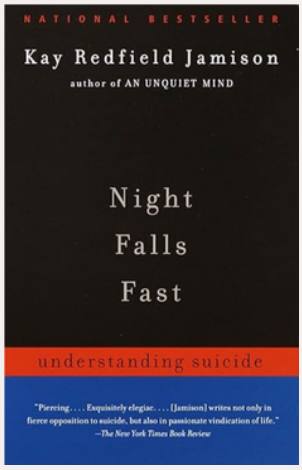
No One Saw My Pain: Why Teens Kill Themselves – Andrew Slaby and Lili Garfinkel



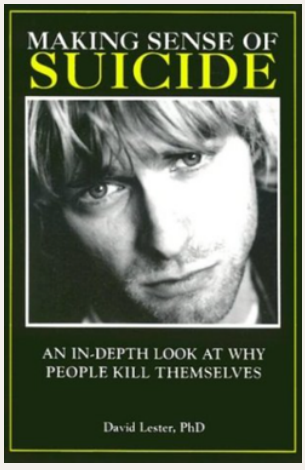
Helping Your Child Cope With Depression & Suicidal Thoughts – Tonia Shamoo and Philip Patros



Suicide, the Forever Decision: For Those Thinking About Suicide and for Those Who Know, Love, or Counsel Them – Paul Quintet



Night Falls Fast – Understanding Suicide – Kay Redfield Jamison



Making Sense of Suicide: An In-Depth Look at Why People Kill Themselves- David Lester

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AND HERE ARE SOME WEBSITES:

American Association of Suicidology

Yellow Ribbon Suiciden Prevention Program

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide

The Jason Foundation – the Parent Resource Program

Office of Suicide Prevention: What Can Parents Do

Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents and Educators

Centre for Suicide Prevention

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