

Children's Mental Health Matters!

a Maryland public awareness campaign

Facts For Educators

Suicide Prevention

Suicide is the act of taking one's own life. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth ages 15-24 and it accounts for 18 percent of all deaths among 15-24 year olds. Every day in the United States, over 5,240 students in grades 7 - 12 attempt suicide. In Maryland, one in six high school students has seriously considered suicide. However, building strong family relationships, having the knowledge of the risks and warning signs of suicide/depression, and having access to prevention and intervention resources will often decrease the likelihood of suicide.

Warning signs may include:

- Depressed mood
- Frequent episodes of running away or being incarcerated
- Family loss or instability; significant problems with parent
- Expressions of suicidal thoughts or talk of death or the afterlife during moments of sadness or boredom
- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Difficulties in dealing with sexual orientation
- Disinterest in or enjoying activities that once were pleasurable
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Impulsive, aggressive behavior; frequent expressions of rage
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Engaging in high risk behaviors (e.g., fire-setting, involvement in cults/gangs, cruelty to animals)
- Social isolation and poor self-esteem
- Witnessing or being exposed to family violence or abuse
- Having a relative who committed or attempted suicide
- Being preoccupied with themes and acts of violence in TV shows, movies, music, magazines, comics, books, video games, and internet sites
- Giving away meaningful belongings

Research has shown that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and/or questioning (GLBTQ) youth are more than twice as

likely to attempt suicide than straight peers. However, sexual orientation is not noted on death certificates in the U.S. so exact completion rates are difficult to report. Studies have also confirmed that GLBTQ youth have higher rates of suicidal ideation than their straight peers and often have more severe risk factors. It is important to note that being GLBTQ is not a risk factor in and of itself; however, minority stressors that GLBTQ youth encounter - such as discrimination and harassment - are directly associated with suicidal behavior as well as indirectly with risk factors for suicide.

Warning signs specific to GLBTQ youth may include:

- A high rate of victimization/bullying
- Difficulties in dealing with sexual orientation
- Lack of family acceptance

IMPORTANT: Some children may exhibit many warning signs yet appear to be coping with their situation and others may show no signs and yet still feel suicidal. The only way to know for sure is to ask your student and to consult a mental health professional.

What can educators do about it?

- Ask the student directly if they are considering suicide. Ask "are you thinking of hurting yourself?" or whether

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Health
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A MARYLAND PUBLIC
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coordinated by

mhamd
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MARYLAND

MCF
maryland coalition of families

they have made a specific plan and have done anything to carry it out. Explain the reasons for your concerns. Listen openly to the student, tell the student that you care deeply and that no matter how overwhelming his or her problems seem, help is available.

- **Immediately contact the student's parents or guardians and get the student professional help** from a doctor, community health center, counselor, psychologist, social worker, youth worker, or minister. You can also call 1-800-273-8255 or the local crisis team. In Maryland, call 2-1-1, press 1.
- **If the student is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local crisis team and then contact their parents.** If the student has a detailed plan or appears acutely suicidal and will not talk, they could be in immediate danger and it is important to get help right away. Do not leave the student alone and seek help immediately.
- **Learn the warning signs, risks and other factors associated with suicide** especially if the student has made suicidal attempts or threats in the past. Ensure the student knows that you are there for them, encourage them to seek you out in times of need, and if you are not there at the time when your child feels depressed or suicidal, have another support person to go to for help.

Resources/Links

American Association of Suicidology

<http://www.suicidology.org/ncpys/resources>

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention:

<http://www.afsp.org>

Centre for Suicide Prevention

<http://www.suicideinfo.ca/>

National Association of School Psychologists:

Preventing Youth Suicide: Tips for Parents & Educators

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/preventing-youth-suicide-tips-for-parents-and-educators>

Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE):

<http://www.save.org/>

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

<https://www.sprc.org/settings/schools>

Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program

<https://yellowribbon.org/>

Adapted from Resources found on:

www.schoolmentalhealth.org

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*Behavioral Health Authorities/
Core Service Agencies by Maryland County
Statewide Maryland Helpline: Call 2-1-1, press 1*

Maryland County	Mental Health	Substance Use
Allegany	301-759-5070	301-759-5050
Anne Arundel	410-222-7858	410-222-7164
Baltimore City	410-433-5175	410-433-5175
Baltimore	410-887-3828	410-887-3828
Calvert	410-535-5400 x318	410-535-3079 x14
Carroll	410-876-4800	410-876-4800
Cecil	410-996-5112	410-996-5106, x 299
Charles	301-609-5757	301-609-5757
Frederick	301-682-6017	301-600-1755
Garrett	301-334-7440	301-334-7670
Harford	410-803-8726	410-877-2341
Howard	410-313-7350	410-313-6202
Mid-Shore (CAROLINE, DORCHESTER, KENT, QUEEN ANNE'S, TALBOT)	410-770-4801	
Caroline	410-479-1882	
Dorchester		410-228-7714, x106
Kent	410-778-5783	410-778-6404
Queen Anne's		410-758-1306, x 4534
Talbot		410-819-5600
Montgomery	240-777-1400	240-777-1400
Prince George's	301-856-9500	301-856-9500
Somerset	410-523-1815	443-523-1787
St. Mary's	301-475-4330	301-475-4330
Washington	301-739-2490	240-313-3310
Wicomico	410-543-6981	410-742-3784
Worcester	410-632-3366	410-632-3366

MHAMD ~ 443-901-1550 ~ www.mhamd.org

MCF ~ 410-730-8267 ~ www.mdcoalition.org

The Children's Mental Health Matters! Campaign is a collaboration of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD) and the Maryland Coalition of Families (MCF) with support from the Maryland Department of Health - Behavioral Health Administration. The Campaign goal, with schools and community champions across the state, is to raise public awareness of the importance of children's mental health. For more information, please visit www.ChildrensMentalHealthMatters.org