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Teen Suicide: Facts And Answers

By Aurelia Williams

According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, "teen suicide is the third leading cause of death among teenagers --- almost 2,000 teens kill themselves each year." Depression is one of the leading causes of teen suicide. It is estimated that "over 90% of teen suicide victims have a mental disorder, such as depression, and/or a history of alcohol or drug abuse." The National Institute of Mental Health considers depression "to be a real medical illness and it's treatable."

What drives a teen to commit suicide? What is so horribly wrong in their lives that ending it is the only alternative? There are risk factors involved in teen suicide: Peer pressure, low self-esteem, dysfunctional family, stress, and access to drugs, guns, and an unyielding desire to make the pain disappear.

Teen suicide has and is becoming a pandemic in our country and around the world. Our youth has become entrenched in an ideology doled out by those who seek to control, persuade and coerce our teenagers. At the same time, communication between parent and child has become, in most situations, non-existent. This leaves teens to fend for themselves in areas they are too young to understand and too eager to become engaged in.

Our music, movies, and educational system have let down our teens in the most rudimentary way. Our teens lack guidance and care. They are the fabric of our society which has been shredding for years and have been reduced to a statistic. Our child services, our family courts, our teens' caregivers have offered nothing to assert the importance of self-worth. Over the years, the make-up of the "family" has dramatically changed. The two-parent household has, in some cases, changed to one. A teen's family could be his gang members who, on a daily basis, feed into the destruction of that teen. Morality has become passé. Many youth have become self-absorbed in an underworld of hatred and self-loathing.

Have all teenagers talked or even thought about suicide? No. However, the statistics are frightening. Who is responsible for this outbreak? Some would agree parents should take a stronger role in their child's life from the outset. A teenager doesn't suddenly choose to die unless something terribly wrong has pushed him/her over the edge. We cannot allow them to choose that end game.

Teen Suicide: Facts And Answers

Teenagers do become depressed, alone, angry, hopeless and helpless. As parents, as friends, as educators, as guardians of this precious commodity – we cannot allow them to succeed in what they think may be in their best interest. They must be given a reason to live, to love, to become needed and useful members of our society. We, as adults, must educate and interact with our youth in a positive, caring and thoughtful way to ensure they have the proper tools with which to grow and gain empowerment. How can we do anything less?

Contact the Statewide Suicide Hotline at 1–800–564–2120 for more information.

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a free resource site for moms.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

By Joan Bramsch

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Useful Links & Things

Need information? Don't know who to ask or where to turn? Here are some useful links and information sources that will respect YOU and your privacy.

Coping With Teens

Most of us were never taught to be parents. So we can't help but disappoint ourselves sometimes. How often have you heard yourself using the very words you hated hearing from your own parents?

When our kids become teenagers, it gets even harder. They seem to reject everything we've taught them. As far as they're concerned, we know nothing. Our values and beliefs are constantly challenged. Every word we utter is seen as interference. Emotions run high.

But we're more important to our teens than ever. As they try out the values of their peers, who are more influential than ever, we counter the pull of drugs, alcohol and early sex. These entangle children every day and can ruin their lives.

Here are some links that might help:

- The turbulent teens
- Getting along with your teen
- Dealing with anger
- Ignoring problems won't make them go away
- What to do if your teen runs away
- If you need to talk

Missing Child

We've compiled a lot of helpful suggestions for finding a missing child right here. Keep in mind that runaways often travel short distances and come back after a few days. Nonetheless, take action immediately.

Think clearly and logically about where your child might be. Try to figure out why he is missing or running away at this particular time. Follow only those suggestions that are useful and in order of their importance. Keep a notebook recording all the steps you've taken and dates.

Useful links:

- Contact the police
- Contact your child's network
- Search your neighborhood
- Who to call for help
- Publicize

- Prepare for a call from your child
- How to cope when your child returns home
- If you need to talk

Suicide

Most young people end up killing themselves because they simply don't know where else to turn. They are in some kind of pain that seems unbearable and they want the pain to stop. They end up stopping their entire lives just because they didn't know what else to do.

Here are some links that might help:

- Why do people kill themselves?
- Suicide warning signs
- What do you know about suicide?
- Need to talk?

MORE INFO HERE:

<http://joanbramsch.com/counseling/links.shtml>

JOAN BRAMSCH is a family person, educator, writer and E-publisher. Her articles appear internationally in print and online. Six of her best-selling adult novels – near one million copies – have

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