

COMMUNITY



CONVERSATIONS

Discussions on issues facing today's teens from
professional and spiritual perspectives

THURSDAY
MARCH 26TH
7 PM
SOUTHWOOD

www.grace-bible.org for details

**TOPIC: TEEN
DEPRESSION
AND SUICIDE**

Depression or Sadness?

- Sadness is normal – without sadness there is no happiness
- Sadness includes emotions of helplessness, loss, grief, misery and sorrow
- **SADNESS IS TEMPORARY**
- *Persistent sadness is the most common symptom of depression, but is not the only symptom*

Symptoms of Depression

All of these can be normal for short periods (generally less than 2 weeks)

- Poor performance in school
- Withdrawal from friends or activities
- Sadness and hopelessness
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Changes in eating habits and weight
- Feelings of guilt
- Feelings of poor self-esteem
- Overreaction to criticism/increased irritability
- Thoughts of death or suicide

We All Need to Know

Adolescents in particular need to know that their reactions are not unique, but are universally shared reactions.

Potential Warning Signs of Suicide

- **Conditions of the teen's life fall short of what they believe to be necessary for happiness, and this is felt to be intolerable.**
- **The teen attributes some or all of these shortcomings or failures to personal inadequacies.**
- **The teen feels that nothing they do will make a difference, that the pain will continue and that they are powerless to make a change.**

Some possible causes of these feelings of hopelessness

- **Emotional/Behavioral Management**
 - Compulsiveness Over-conformity
 - Compulsiveness to Fail
- **Unrealistic Perceptions**
- **Lack of Coping Skills**
- **Harmful Relationships**
 - Family Dynamics
 - Friends

Common Suicide Risk Factors

- **Previous Suicide Attempt**
- **Talking About Dying**
- **Repeatedly Engaging in Risky Behavior**
- **“Getting House in Order” – Giving away their possessions**
- **Changes in habits, friends, or appearance**
- **Changes in weight, sleeping, physical activity**
- **Withdrawal from friends and family**
- **Exposure to suicidal behavior of others**

Remembering the Warning Signs

- I - IDEATION**
- S - SUBSTANCE ABUSE**
- P - PURPOSELESSNESS**
- A - ANXIETY**
- T - TRAPPED**
- H - HOPELESSNESS**
- W - WITHDRAWAL**
- A - ANGER**
- R - RECKLESSNESS**
- M - MOOD CHANGE**

(American Association of Suicidology)

High Risk Groups

- **Adolescent males**
- **Adolescent with access to firearms**
- **Native American youth**
- **Substance abusing youth**
- **Gay or Lesbian youth**
- **Adolescents with undiagnosed mental illness**

(Youth Suicide Prevention Program)

What Can Parents Do?

Depression

- Recognize and accept – depression is not a personal weakness, a character flaw or the result of poor parenting.
- Understand – depression saps energy and self-esteem and interferes with a person's ability or wish to get help.
- Know – often a depressed person's low energy will be criticized, called lazy, look like a lack of effort or poor attitude.
- Realize – about 80% of people who get help for their depression have a better quality of life. (Kidshealth.org).

Tips for talking:

- Offer support
- Be gentle but persistent
- Listen without lecturing
- Validate feelings
- Trust your instincts

Offering support:

- Be understanding
- Encourage physical activity
- Encourage social activity
- Stay involved in treatment
- Learn about depression



What about suicide?

- **Be aware of the warning signs**
- **Be aware of the facts (educate yourself)**
- **Know how to be helpful – ask questions**
- **Be aware of feelings, thoughts and behaviors**
- **Know who to contact**

(American Association of Suicidology)

How To Be Helpful

- **Be direct – talk openly and matter-of-factly**
- **Be willing to listen**
- **Be non-judgmental**
- **Get involved**
- **Don't act shocked or dare them**
- **Don't be sworn to secrecy**
- **Offer hope that alternatives are available**

Be Aware of Feelings, Thoughts, Behaviors...

- **Can't stop the pain**
- **Can't think clearly**
- **Can't make decisions**
- **Can't see any way out**
- **Can't sleep, eat or work**

- **Can't get out of the depression**
- **Can't make the sadness go away**
- **Can't see the possibility of change**
- **Can't see themselves as worthwhile**
- **Can't get someone's attention**
- **Can't seem to get control**

**Get help from those
who specialize in
suicide prevention!**

Know Who to Contact...

- **A community mental health agency**
- **A school counselor or psychologist**
- **A suicide prevention/crisis center**
- **A private therapist**
- **A family physician**
- **A religious/spiritual leader**

Contact Information...

Mental Health Services

- **Palmer Drug Abuse Program** **979-739-4253**
Pdap.bv@gmail.com
- **STAR Program** **979-260-7336**
- **Grimes St. Joseph Health**
Center Psychiatric Services **936-825-6585**
- **MHMR** **979-361-9815**
- **Emergency Services** **911**
- **Community Services** **211**

Students

What can be done to help a friend?

Peers are crucial to suicide prevention. According to one survey, 93% of the students reported they would turn to a friend before a teacher, parent or spiritual guide in a time of crisis .

(Teenagers in Crisis, 1983).

- **Know the warning signs**
- **Don't be afraid to talk to friends**
- **Make no deals**
- **Tell an adult**
- **Ask about resources at your school**

(National Association of School Psychology)