



Los Angeles Unified School District
Division of School Operations
Student Health and Human Services
School Mental Health

lausd.org/shhs | lausd.org/smh



Suicide Prevention Awareness for Parents/Caregivers

Suicide is an increasingly serious issue facing teens today that takes an enormous toll on families, friends, classmates, co-workers, and communities. Suicide prevention is the collective effort of all - students and adults - with the aim of empowering youth know the signs and come forward to a trusted adult. Together, if we say something, we can prevent someone from ending their own life.

Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” These warning signs signal the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide. If so, then suicide prevention strategies will be required.

- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Suicide notes and plans
- History of suicidal ideation/behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions, posting plans on social media, sending text messages to friends)

Risk Factors

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain risk factors associated with increased suicide risk. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present they signal the need to be vigilant for the warning signs of suicide.



- Access to means (e.g., firearms, knives, medication)
- Stressors (e.g., loss, peer relations, school, gender identity issues)
- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse
- History of suicide in the family or of a close friend
- History of mental illness in the family

Understanding Suicide: Myths & Facts

To understand why people die by suicide and why so many others attempt to take their own lives, it is important to know some of the facts about suicide.

Myth: *Suicide can't be prevented. If someone is set on taking their own life, there is nothing that can be done to stop them.*

Fact: Suicide is preventable. The vast majority of people contemplating suicide don't really want to die. They are seeking an end to intense mental or physical pain. Most have a mental illness. Interventions can save lives.

Myth: *Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head and cause them to act on it.*

Fact: When someone you know is in crisis or depressed, asking them if they are thinking about suicide can actually help. By giving a person an opportunity to open up and share their troubles, you can help alleviate their pain and find solutions.

Myth: *Someone making suicidal threats won't really do it, they are just looking for attention.*

Fact: Those who talk about suicide or express thoughts about wanting to die, are at risk for suicide and need your attention. Most people who die by suicide give some indication or warning. Take all threats of suicide seriously. Even if you think they are just “crying out for help”—it is in fact a cry for help — so help.

Myth: *It is easy for parents/caregivers to tell when their child is showing signs of suicidal behavior.*

Fact: Unfortunately, research shows that this is not the case in a surprisingly large percentage of families. This illustrates the importance for parents/caregivers to be attentive to warning signs and risk factors; to ask direct questions; and be open to conversation.

Resources

For consultation, contact the LAUSD Student and Family Wellness Hotline at (213) 241-3840.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION / After Hours Services

If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771

Los Angeles School Police Department (213) 625-6631

Resources for Students & Parents/Caregivers

Crisis Text Line (24/7)

- Text "LA" to 741741

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (24/7)

For individuals who are in a suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

- Call: 988 or 800.273.8255
- Text: 988
- Chat: <https://988lifeline.org/>

Teen Line (6pm–10pm PST, Daily)

Trained teen listeners provide support, resources and hope to any teen who is struggling.

- Call: 800.852.8336
- Text: TEEN to 839863

Trevor Lifeline (24/7)

Crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24.

- Call: 866.488.7386
- Text: 678678
- Chat: <https://thetrevorproject.org/webchat>

Online Resources

www.didihirsch.org
www.sandyhookpromise.org
www.thetrevorproject.org
www.teenline.org
www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide



Los Angeles Schools Anonymous Reporting (LASAR)

App to anonymously report instances of suspicious activity, mental health incidents, and other safety issues from a smartphone.

What should I do if I am worried about my child?

As a parent/ caregiver, you play an important role in the life of a child.

If you believe that your child is thinking about suicide, approach the situation by asking. Asking is the first step in saving a life and can let them know that you are here for them and will listen. Make sure to take action immediately and connect them with the appropriate support at school or with a mental health agency.

Here are some Psychological First Aid (PFA)* strategies you can utilize to provide support and respond:

LISTEN

- Listen without judgment.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as:
- Tell me what happened?
 - *How long have you been feeling this way?*
 - *Have you thought about suicide?*
 - *Sometimes when people feel sad the way you do, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?*

PROTECT

- Take action immediately.
- Do not leave your child alone. You or a trusted adult should supervise/monitor your child.
- Safety plan at home. Consider removing dangerous objects (e.g., medications, sharp objects, weapons)

CONNECT

- Go to your child's school for support from school administration, mental health personnel, or a counselor.
- Seek options for school and community resources, including referrals to professional mental health services.

MODEL

- Remain calm.
- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions as you listen without judgment.
- Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.

TEACH

- Teach your child how to ask for help and identify *Trusted Adults* at school, home, and community.
- Teach healthy ways to cope with stress, including deep breathing, writing/drawing, exercise, or talking.

*The PFA: Listen, Protect, Connect Model was created in partnership by UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters, LAUSD Trauma Services Adaptation Center and the National Center for the School Crisis and Bereavement. The authors M. Schreiber, R. Gurwitch, and M. Wong have authorized this adaptation.

School Contact Information

School: _____

Crisis Team Member: _____

Phone/Extension: _____

Crisis Team Member: _____

Phone/Extension: _____