

# Suicide Prevention and Intervention: Parents' Guide to Helping

*Suicide prevention is a community effort. We all play a role.*

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian,

Getting help for a child that is struggling may seem like an overwhelming task. This is especially true when a child has a mental illness. Seeking help can be different based on your child's needs, but sometimes that help may include a hospital visit or stay.

The first step is to talk to a mental health professional. Depending on that interaction, your child may need mental health services. On the other hand, your child may need intensive interventions, such as a hospital visit.

If there are serious or imminent concerns for the child's safety call 911.

Parents/Legal Guardians:

- ✓ *Take threats to self-harm seriously.* Following through with access to care is important even after the youth calms down or makes statements such as, "I didn't mean it."
- ✓ *Ask for help.* If parents need support with following through on referrals, they may consent to have school personnel contact the community provider. School personnel can also provide referrals to community based services.
- ✓ *Maintain communication with the school.* Your communication will be crucial to ensure that the school team is able to support the youth during school hours.

### School Contacts

Name and Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations for parent/family/loved that may increase child's safety.

Adopted from: <https://www.healthychildren.org>

1. **Do not let your teen's depression or anxiety snowball.** Tell your teen that you are concerned and that together, you will seek help.
2. **Listen—even when your teen is not talking.** Pay attention to changes in behavior. Youth do not often talk about what is bothering them. Listen, do not judge, and seek help together.
3. **Never shrug off threats of suicide as typical teenage melodrama.** Any of these other red flags warrants your immediate attention and action by seeking professional help right away:
  - ❖ "Nothing matters."
  - ❖ "I wonder how many people would come to my funeral."
  - ❖ "Sometimes I wish I could just go to sleep and never wake up."
  - ❖ "Everyone would be better off without me."
  - ❖ "You won't have to worry about me much longer."
4. **Seek professional help right away.**
5. **Share your feelings.** Tell your youth about your concerns and feelings. Normalize feelings such as sadness, anxiety and anger and tell them everyone goes through difficult times. Things normally improve with time and the right kind of help.
6. **Encourage your teen to not isolate himself or herself from family and friends.**
7. **Recommend exercise.** Exercise or physical activity improves overall well-being by reducing stress and increasing energy.
8. **Urge your teen not to demand too much of himself or herself.** If your youth is overwhelmed with stress, troubleshoot together on what reasonable changes you can make.
9. **Remind your teen who is undergoing treatment not to expect immediate results.** Improving health or well-being takes time and commitment. Do not give up!

## HOSPITALIZATION (PSYCHIATRIC HOLD) BEFORE AND AFTER

### BEFORE

- Ask questions about where you are going and what is going on.
- Bring any health information or history regarding your son/daughter.
- Expect a long wait at the hospital.
- A general medical doctor may need to clear your youth before admission to the psychiatric unit.
- Have health insurance information ready. If you do not have health insurance, inform medical staff as soon as you are asked for that information.
- If you are not available and it has been determined that your son/daughter needs to be hospitalized, school staff will work with local first responders to ensure your child is safe, and if necessary safely transported to the hospital.

### AFTER

- Make sure you have discharge papers (*Paperwork detailing the care received during hospitalization and follow up recommendations.*)
- Discharge paperwork may include community resources and/or information about mental health services. Follow through with all recommendations.
- **Inform the school as soon as possible when your son/daughter is release or when you have the release date from the hospital. This will ensure there is a *Re-Entry* meeting with school staff.**

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### Mental Health "Red Flags" Parents Should Be Alert:

- ❖ Excessive [sleeping](#), beyond usual teenage fatigue.
- ❖ Abandonment or loss of interest in favorite pastimes.
- ❖ Unexpected and dramatic [decline in academic performance](#).
- ❖ Weight loss and loss of appetite.
- ❖ Personality or behavior changes and changes, extreme mood swings

### Wellness Action Plan

- ❖ Follow through with recommendations to seek help.
- ❖ Keep important phone numbers for therapist, doctors, school, and youth's friends handy for quick access.
- ❖ Keep names and phone numbers of family members and friends who would be helpful in a crisis.
- ❖ When at home, do not leave your youth alone; ensure a responsible adult is home at all times.
- ❖ Implement a 24-hour watch, where you are checking in on your youth – even at night!
- ❖ Remove locks from their bedroom doors.
- ❖ Keep local crisis numbers and addresses of emergency rooms handy.
- ❖ Your loved one's diagnosis (if any) and medications.
- ❖ History or previous psychosis or suicide attempts.
- ❖ History of drug use.
- ❖ Triggers (what causes your youth to get upset or what brings emotional distress).
- ❖ Things that have helped in the past.
- ❖ If necessary call 911 or local police number to help in transporting your youth to the nearest hospital.
- ❖ Have family meetings and go over your plan with members of your family who are old enough to understand.

### HOTLINES (24 HOUR)

#### Centralized Assessment Team (CAT) – 866-830-6011 or 714-517-6353

Provides psychiatric evaluation services, psychiatric & involuntary hospitalization.  
<http://ochealthinfo.com/bhs>

#### National Domestic Violence Hotline – 800-799-SAFE 7233

Provides crisis intervention, safety planning, information and referrals to agencies. All calls are confidential and anonymous. [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)

#### Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline – 800-4-ACHILD or 800-422-4453

Hotline offers crisis intervention, referrals to emergency, social service, and support resources.  
[www.childhelp.org](http://www.childhelp.org)

#### The OC Warm Line – 877-910-WARM 714-991-6412 [Warm Line](#).

Are you lonely or confused? Do you have substance abuse and/or mental health concerns? Need information about available mental health services? (Local) M - F 9 a.m. to 3 a.m. Sat and Sun 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. Live Chat available at [www.namioc.org](http://www.namioc.org)

### SUICIDE PREVENTION & INTERVENTION

#### SUICIDE Prevention Lifeline – 800-273-TALK 8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.  
[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

#### Didi Hirsch SUICIDE Crisis Line – 877-7CRISIS or 877-727-4747.

Counselors are available to talk about your thoughts of suicide or your concerns about someone who is or may be suicidal.  
[www.suicidepreventioncenter.org](http://www.suicidepreventioncenter.org)

#### Trevor SUICIDE Line (LGBTIQ) – 866-488-7386

Provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ). [www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

### RUNAWAY YOUTH

#### Runaway Switchboard – 800-Runaway or 800 786-2929

Provides services for teenagers thinking of running away or who are run-aways. Email: [info@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:info@1800RUNAWAY.org).  
[www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org)

#### Casa Youth Shelter – 800-914-CASA 2272 or 714-995-8601

Provides emergency temporary shelter for homeless, runaway, abandoned youth, and youth in crisis. Facility provides 24/7 shelter care for youth ages 12-17. Address: 10911 Reagan St., Los Alamitos, CA 9072  
[www.casayouthshelter.org](http://www.casayouthshelter.org)

#### Waymakers Youth Shelter - 714 842-6600

Aa "safe-haven" for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth 11-17 years of age. Address: 7291 Talbert Avenue, Huntington Beach, California 92648-1232.  
[www.cspinc.org](http://www.cspinc.org)

### POLICE DEPARTMENT NUMBERS

- 911 – Always Call 911 if there is a risk or you feel unsafe
- Anaheim Police Department: 714-765-1900
- Buena Park Police Department: 714-562-3902
- Stanton Police Department: 714-647-7000
- Cypress Police Department: 714-229-6600
- La Palma Police Department: 714-690-3370

### ADDITIONAL CRISIS HOTLINES

- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- The Trevor Life Line: 24/7: [1-866-488-7386](tel:1-866-488-7386)
  - Text "START" to 678-678
- CA Youth Crisis Line: 1-800-843-5200
- Teen Line: Call (310) 855-HOPE or (800) TLC-TEEN (nationwide toll-free) from 6pm to 10pm PST
  - Text "TEEN" to 839863 between 6:00 pm-9:00 pm

**AUHSD School Based Mental Health Services**  
**Office: 714-999-7734**