

# TEEN SUICIDE

The teenage years are often a time of turmoil, which includes frequent mood swings and sadness. Teenagers experience feelings of stress, confusion, self-doubt, pressure to succeed, financial uncertainty and other fears while growing up.

For some teenagers, divorce, the formation of a new family with step-parents and step-siblings, or moving to a new community can be very unsettling and intensify self-doubts. Some teens may see suicide as a solution to their problems and stress.

Depression is common and can be serious when prolonged. Individuals with depression have a higher risk of suicide, but with intervention and treatment, most get better.

## Symptoms:

- » Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- » Withdrawal from family and friends
- » Violent actions, rebellious behavior, or running away
- » Drug and alcohol use
- » Guilt or hopeless feelings
- » Unusual neglect of personal appearance
- » Marked personality change
- » Persistent boredom, difficulty concentrating, or a decline in the quality of schoolwork
- » Frequent complaints about physical symptoms, often related to emotions, such as stomachaches, headaches, fatigue, etc.
- » Loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- » Feelings of loneliness and rejection
- » Giving away favorite possessions
- » Sudden mood or behavioral changes

## How You Can Help:

Most depressed or suicidal people feel worthless and have little hope. They deny their emotions or won't talk about them because they don't want to burden others. If you think someone is depressed or suicidal, take it seriously and take time to talk about it.

- » Reassure them and encourage them to get help
- » Don't lecture

If a child or adolescent says, "I want to kill myself" or "I'm going to commit suicide," always take the statement seriously and immediately seek assistance from a qualified mental health professional.

People often feel uncomfortable talking about death. However, asking someone whether they are depressed or thinking about suicide can be helpful. Rather than putting thoughts in a child's head, such a question will provide assurance that somebody can and will give them the chance to talk about problems.