

## IRREVERSIBLE ERRORS

Every year, approximately 5,000 teenagers in this country take their own lives. Suicide is the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. Each year there are about 10 suicides for every 100,000 youth.

Kids as young as 10 kill themselves, and the suicide rate increases throughout adolescence. No race, gender or social group is exempt.

The tragic loss of young lives is bad enough, but there is another consideration. For every person who takes their own life, it's estimated that there are six to eight "suicide survivors"—the loved ones whose lives are changed forever by the death.

At the heart of the problem lies a single word—depression.

It's true that sometimes a traumatic event—a break-up, parents' divorce, or loss of a loved one, for example—can trigger a suicide attempt. But the majority of teens who commit or attempt suicide are suffering from major depression. That term fails to capture the intense psychological pain and crushing hopelessness experienced by its victims.



Because depression robs people of hope, some see suicide as the only way of escape. That couldn't be further from the truth because suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. There is always another way.

If you are contemplating suicide, or know someone who is, the most important thing is to get help. With the right support and treatment, the pain of trauma or depression will go away. Suicide, on the other hand, will never go away—not for the loved ones left behind, for whom the loss is devastating, and not for the person who wastes his or her life by ending it prematurely.



**SUICIDE IS A  
PERMANENT  
SOLUTION  
TO A  
TEMPORARY  
PROBLEM.**

## RESOURCES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Available 24-hours a day, in English or Spanish.

Call or Text: 988

Visit: [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

Girls and Boys Town National Hotline

AAS certified crisis, resource and referral line, staffed 24-hours a day.

1-800-448-3000 (TDD 1-800-448-1833)

***in the know***

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## TEEN SUICIDE

**THE MISTAKE YOU  
CAN'T CORRECT**





## THE DEPRESSION CONNECTION

Depression's connection to suicide makes it one of the most common life-threatening illnesses. Most cases of major depression remain undiagnosed and untreated—even though the symptoms are usually dairly evident.

### DEPRESSED PEOPLE TYPICALLY:

- Withdraw from friends and family
- Lose interest in work, school and hobbies
- Neglect their personal appearance
- Increase their use of alcohol and drugs
- Make comments reflecting hopelessness

### IF THEY ARE CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE, THEY MAY:

- Talk about suicide, death or having no reason to live
- Indulge in impulsive or risky behavior
- Decide unexpectedly to make a will or funeral arrangements
- Give away prized possessions, even pets



If you have any of the symptoms of depression, you may want to talk to a family member to see if you have a family history of depression or suicide.

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE, AND HELP IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE

In adolescents and young adults, male suicide rates are 2-4 times higher, while females are 3-9 times more likely to attempt suicide.

While experts cite a number of influences that help explain this disparity, the higher rate of depression among females and the methods chosen by the sexes are probably the dominant factors. Boys typically use highly lethal means, while girls tend to use methods with a higher survival rate.

While many who attempt suicide and fail have every intention of succeeding, some experts have developed the term "suicide gesture" for self-destructive acts that hold little chance of success. They consider these acts very serious cries for help rather than earnest attempts at self-destruction.

However, even a teen who doesn't seriously intend to end his or her life is putting himself in danger by making a suicide attempt. Any attempt on one's life holds the risk of succeeding, or of causing unforeseen injury such as paralysis, brain damage or other permanent illness. A suicide attempt is never a good way to communicate pain or get someone's love or attention. There are always better ways to reach out to people—ways that don't put your life at stake.



## HOW TO HELP

Suicide is not a choice. It is the act of someone who feels that depression's pain and hopelessness have deprived them of all choices.

If you suspect that someone is contemplating suicide, you will need to get the person to qualified, professional help as quickly as possible. In the process, here are some things you should and shouldn't do:

### DO

- Ask the person openly if they are contemplating suicide
- Talk freely and non-judgmentally about suicide
- Make it clear that you are willing to listen and welcome expressions of feelings
- Offer hope that alternatives are available, and offer to accompnay the person to get help

### DON'T

- Dare the person to carry out a suicide attempt
- Debate whether suicide is right or wrong
- Allow yourself to be sworn to secrecy

## Help is available.