

CHECKING OUT EARLY

You haven't seen the big picture yet. Everything that happens seems to encompass your life. It's going on now, and it might as well always be this way.

On the one hand this ability to live in the moment is a beautiful thing. It encourages satisfaction, focus and the ability to feel a great depth of emotion. On the other hand, without perspective, every negative feeling is also amplified. Every minor pressure can seem like a life-changing, endless crisis.

This crisis mentality comes from a lack of experience. Coping with life's hard parts takes practice and learning.

The belief that their distress will continue forever makes a young person feel helpless, hopeless, trapped and alone.



Why, they reason, should I continue my life like this? It's a sad thought – and one that all too often ends in suicide.

Your problems have solutions. There are good things to live for now and great things to look forward to.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If you feel worthless and overwhelmed and hopeless, stop. Take a breather and a long look around. You have a life worth living. Think about all that's good about you, all that you are and all you can become.

If you're feeling suicidal:

- Reach out to a close friend or loved one – even though it might be hard to talk about your feelings
- Contact a minister or someone in your faith community
- Call the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988
- Talk to your doctor or a mental health professional

You're not alone, help is always available, and no one will look down on you for seeking it out.

RESOURCES

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Available 24-hours a day in English or Spanish.

Call or Text: 988

Visit: 988lifeline.org

Stop Youth Suicide:

www.stopyouthsuicide.com

National Alliance on Mental Illness:

nami.org/kids-teens-and-young-adults

in the know

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YOUTH SUICIDE

*everything
to live for*



IT AIN'T EASY BEING A KID

Kids, tweens and teens bow to some serious pressures. It can feel like being a leaf on the sea, at the mercy of forces beyond their control.

Do you or your friends confront:

- An unhappy or abusive home?
- A recent family change like a divorce, new baby or parental job loss?
- A difficult relocation?
- School trouble?
- Serious bullies?
- A bad break-up?
- Trouble making or keeping friends?
- A negative environment with lots of drugs, sex or violence?
- The death of a loved one?
- Trouble dating?
- Accepting who you are?
- Your own drug use, persistent dark thoughts or mental problems?

under pressure



These are all factors that contribute to suicidal tendencies. But even if you don't have these particular problems, it's tough being a kid. You have to put up with parents, teachers, authority figures, mean friends and all the pressures of building a life.

The good thing about all these problems is that they all go away, and soon. Youth may seem like the most important time of your life, but really it's a very small part. Concentrate on having the best time possible and building the foundation for a good future and you'll be just fine.

WOULD YOU RECOGNIZE A FRIEND IN NEED?

Suicide seems to shock everyone. "No one ever thought he'd kill himself," or, "She never seemed like the type," are commonly heard. Even sadder is that the warning signs were usually there, and could have been clear to anyone who knew what to look for.

Some of the most common warning signs of suicide risk include:

Personal changes

- Appearance
- Habits

read the signs

- Abandoning interests
- Personal hygiene

Risky behavior

- Self-harm
- Dangerous driving
- Unprotected sex
- Increased drug and/or alcohol use

Morbid thoughts

- Talking about suicide, even jokingly
- Obsession with death, weapons or violence
- Talking about other people who committed suicide
- Clinical depression or persistent sadness

TALKING TO A SUICIDAL FRIEND

Talking to someone who is suicidal is really about listening — listening to someone at their lowest or most desperate. They may curse, yell or weep. They may not want to talk much at all. They may say things you don't agree with.

Listen carefully and don't argue about their outlook: To them, they're right. Saying they're wrong will make them shut you out. Encourage them to open up. Let them know you'll listen,



you won't judge them and you want to know what they have to say. Make sure you know what they mean by saying, "So what I hear is..."

Let them get their feelings out and then talk about the future, either the immediate future (just today or tonight) or the near or distant future. Try to get them to think of the things they have to look forward to.

THE LAST WORD

Ending your life doesn't make a point. It isn't a grand statement and it won't teach anyone anything. If you've thought about suicide, talk to someone. Contact a counselor or doctor. Reach out to a friend.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.
YOU CAN GET HELP.

