

A NEW DAY PEDIATRIC PSYCHOLOGY

HEALING THE HURT. EDUCATING THE MIND. INSPIRING THE SOUL.



A New Day Pediatric Psychology, PLLC falls under the vision of Dr. Ann-Louise T. Lockhart, Pediatric Psychologist and Board Certified in Child and Adolescent Psychology.

A New Day specializes in evidence-based behavioral health treatment, interventions, and psychological evaluations for children, adolescents, and adults with known or suspected behavioral health and/or medical conditions affecting all aspects of development and functioning.

Suicide: Communication Could Save A Life

BY: MELVIA PHILLIPS,
LPC-ASSOCIATE,
INTERN AT A NEW DAY



One of the leading causes of death among children, adolescents, and young adults 15-24 years of age according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is suicide. Most children and adolescents attempting suicide suffer with mental illness and are often depressed (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry AACAP, 2018). There are warning signs present in individuals considering suicide. An awareness of these warning signs might help to prevent a suicide.

- Sleeping too much or too little
- Acting anxious or upset
- Showing rage
- Withdrawing or isolating
- Extreme mood swings
- Behaving recklessly
- Increasing use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Talking about feeling hopeless, trapped, or a burden to others
- Talking about suicide or wanting to die



It is important for you and your child to seek help if any of these warning signs causes distress!

Parents often do not know what their children are thinking and feeling as they grow older. Because children begin to gain more autonomy and independence; they attempt to handle problems on their own. Adolescence comes with its ups and downs; however, parents must know when to address the child's behavior and seek help.

Typically, 9/10 teens who commit suicide have some type of mood disorder. When a child or adolescent is depressed, they will withdraw; this is usually a cry for help, although they do not know how to verbalize what they are feeling. As parents, we must learn to listen even when our children are not talking.

Children sometimes talk about death, yet it may not indicate they are suicidal. There is a difference between morbid and suicidal thoughts. Morbid thoughts occur when the child mentions that they would be okay if they were dead to escape something unpleasant or painful (i.e. chronic pain, bullying, having no friends). Suicidal thoughts are actual thoughts about being dead and wishing one were dead. So, it is important as parents we assess what is really going on and validate what the child is feeling. Often the child displays behavior that will reveal their state of mind. Parents must never ignore threats of suicide but take each threat seriously. Remember, children often give signals to indicate how they are feeling. When parents normalize their children's thoughts and validate them, they are more likely to be open. They want to know they are heard and will receive the help they need.

**Do you need to
talk to
someone?**

**National Suicide
Prevention
Lifeline
800-273-8255**

**Crisis Text Line
Text HELLO to
741741**

**Trevor Project
Hotline
866-488-7386**

This newsletter is issued every first and third week of each month.

The purpose of this newsletter is to educate, inspire, and bring healing and awareness by discussing a variety of behavioral health and medical conditions.


Pediatric Psychology, PLLC

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Treatment Options:

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). Encourages the person to identify negative thoughts which can lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Assists with recognizing negative thoughts and feelings of distress (i.e. mindfulness skills).

Meaningful social connections: When your child has healthy connections, it can be therapeutic (i.e. peer connections, support groups).

Teaching coping skills: Children should participate in enjoyable activities (i.e. read a book, exercise, deep breathing, create artwork, positive self-talk).

Learning problem-solving skills: Encourage children to openly communicate feelings in a healthy way and ask for help when needed.

Reduce access to lethal means: Store medications in a safe place and keep firearms and sharp objects out of reach.

Medication: Medication plus therapy and support can be very effective for those who are experiencing moderate to severe depression.

Tips for parents:

- Keep an open line of communication with your children (i.e. be non-judgmental, ask how they are feeling).
- Assure your children that you love them unconditionally.
- Express empathy by understanding what your child is thinking or feeling.

Finally, parenting can be challenging and rewarding at the same time. Children need reassurance often and want to know that their parents love for them is never-ending. As you continue this parenting journey, know that you are not alone. So, continue to persevere, stay encouraged, and never give up on your children. Their lives are worth it.

If you or someone you know is experiencing thoughts of suicide, please reach out immediately as this could save a life. Call the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255.

References

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/fastfact.html>

https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Teen-Suicide-010.aspx

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Ten-Things-Parents-Can-Do-to-Prevent-Suicide.aspx>

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or posts, stories,
podcasts, webinars,
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how to change the way
you speak to your
children.**



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