

Suicide: What Should I Know?

Why am I having these thoughts?

Many young people with depression think about hurting or killing themselves at some time. In fact, thoughts about death and dying are one of the symptoms of depression. Just like depression is treatable if you recognize it and get help, these feelings and thoughts can be treated and you can feel better. But it is up to you to let people know when you are feeling very depressed or out of control and it is up to you to let people help you through this time.

What are the warning signs?

Learn to recognize your own warning signs. Everybody is different and the things you notice when you begin to feel very depressed may be different from those other people report. But here is a list of some things that may signal a problem:

- ✓ Feeling very hopeless, like nothing will ever get better
- ✓ Not wanting to be around friends or family or take part in fun activities
- ✓ Not caring about anything anymore, like school or how you look
- ✓ Drinking or using drugs
- ✓ Doing risky things, such as driving recklessly or getting into fights
- ✓ Having lots of thoughts or dreams about death and dying
- ✓ Having a lot of stresses or life changes that seem hard to handle
- ✓ Feeling like you have a little more energy than usual

What can I do?

If you feel like things are getting out of control, you need to let someone know. Talk to your parents, your doctor, teacher, counselor, or a good friend! Don't keep these feelings inside. There are things you can do to help yourself get through these tough times. Don't be afraid to ask others to help you do these things as well.

- ✓ Keep your doctor or counselor informed about symptoms. Get symptoms treated early before they become worse.
- ✓ Keep in regular contact with someone on your treatment team. Set up a weekly (or even daily) time to check in with them and let them know how you are doing.
- ✓ Do what you can to reduce stresses. Learn what stressors are likely to really bother you and try to manage those first.
- ✓ Avoid alcohol and drugs. They may make you feel better temporarily but they will eventually make your depression and suicidal feelings worse.
- ✓ Let your parents have responsibility for giving you your medications and keeping all medications in a safe place.
- ✓ Develop a plan with others about what you will do if you feel suicidal. Carry phone numbers of people you can contact and who will stay with you until you are safe.
- ✓ Always try to find something to look forward to.

Suicide is a serious subject. Although it can be difficult, talking about it is an important step to getting better. By letting people know when you are thinking about death or hurting yourself, you can begin to get the help you need.

PEOPLE CAN AND DO GET BETTER!