

# Protecting Youth From Suicide

## COMPILED BY PARENTS FOR PARENTS

**Being a young person is hard.** Youth face greater social, emotional and achievement pressures, which increases the risk for substance use, depression, anxiety and suicide.

**Being a parent is hard.** We do the best we can with what we have and what we know. As parents, we play a key role in protecting our youth. This guide is intended as a tool for supporting youth and a resource when we need to seek help.

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### **Connect**

Youth want and need more time with parents, even if they don't act like it.

2

### **Listen**

Be ready to listen when they want to talk.

3

### **Accept**

Let them be their own person. Respect their values.

4

### **Build Trust**

Be a safe place for them to share the realities of their world.

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### **Talk**

Talk to them about sex, drugs, screen time, harmful behaviors and suicide. Research shows talking about it will not lead to increased behavior.

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### **Empower**

Serve as consultant. Ask, "What are your options?" Avoid telling them what to do.

7

### **Cultivate a Healthy Home Environment**

Work with youth to make the home a safe haven from rest of the world.

## Acknowledge Value

Value their effort and character over achievement.

## Seek Help

- Understand that some level of youth sadness, anxiousness and/or confusion is normal. Recognize when it goes on too long or gets worse, and ask other people in your youth's world what they're seeing or hearing.
- **Warning signs may include:** loss of interest in usual activities, withdrawal from social contact, changes in their eating or sleeping patterns, drastic mood swings or personality changes, and declining performance in school, thoughts of dying or suicide, and/or giving away personal items of value.
  - Ask your youth directly about thoughts of suicide if they exhibit these signs.
  - Seek help if you have concerns about your child's safety or well-being.
  - **Common risk factors include:** family discord; identity issues; recent loss; end of a relationship; and domestic violence in the home.
- **Non-Crisis Mental Health Resources:**
  - If an individual is not in immediate danger and does not require crisis services, resources may be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/ttsrpc>
- **Crisis Services:**
  - Call or text 988.
  - Visit the 24/7 Diversus Lighthouse Walk-in Crisis Center (no charge), located at 115 S. Parkside Drive in Colorado Springs or call 719-572-6100.

988 is a free, confidential 24/7 mental health support line where you can call or text to connect with a trained specialist. Parents can reach out for guidance if their child is struggling.