



## SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

Here are five signs that may mean someone is in emotional pain and might need help. For more information go to: <http://www.changedirection.org/know-the-five-signs/>

### 1 PERSONALITY CHANGE

Their personality changes. You may notice sudden or gradual changes in the way that someone typically behaves. He or she may behave in ways that don't seem to fit the person's values, or the person may just seem different.

### 2 AGITATION

They seem uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated, or moody. You may notice the person has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down. People in more extreme situations of this kind may be unable to sleep or may explode in anger at a minor problem.

### 3 WITHDRAWAL

They withdraw or isolate themselves from other people. Someone who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities he or she used to enjoy. In more severe cases the person may start failing to make it to work or school. Not to be confused with the behavior of someone who is more introverted, this sign is marked by a change in someone's typical sociability, as when someone pulls away from the social support he or she typically has.

### 4 POOR SELF-CARE

They stop taking care of themselves and may engage in risky behavior. You may notice a change in the person's level of personal care or an act of poor judgment on his or her part. For instance, someone may let his or her personal hygiene deteriorate, or the person may start abusing alcohol or illicit substances or engaging in other self-destructive behavior that may alienate loved ones.

### 5 HOPELESSNESS

They seem overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by their circumstances. Have you noticed someone who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about? That person may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, or feelings of worthlessness or guilt. People in this situation may say that the world would be better off without them, suggesting suicidal thinking.

People who attempt suicide may exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do. The more warning signs, the greater the risk. Find more information at [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org).

### TALK

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others (Saying things like "No one will miss me" or "You'll be better off")
- Feeling trapped, hopeless or worthless
- Unbearable pain

### BEHAVIOR

A person's suicide risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased, especially if it's related to a painful event, loss, or change.

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, such as searching online for materials or means
- Acting recklessly/taking risks
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Change in appetite
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Drop in grades
- Aggression
- Agitation

### MOOD

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods. Look for mood changes.

- Depression
- Loss of interest
- Rage
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame (as after a relationship break up or academic failure)
- Anxiety



## SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may try to take his or her life. The more risk factors, the greater the risk.

Suicide can be difficult to predict and warning signs can go unrecognized.

The act of suicide is often impulsive and occurs during a short-term crisis. If lethal means are available, risk of suicide increases dramatically.

Firearms are the most lethal means of suicide.

Storing firearms locked and unloaded, separate from ammunition, can decrease the risk of a short-term crisis becoming a fatal tragedy. You can also remove the firearm from the location temporarily.

### HEALTH FACTORS

- Mental health conditions (depression, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Borderline or Antisocial Personality Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Psychotic disorder or psychotic symptoms, anxiety disorders)
- Substance Use Disorders
- Serious or chronic health condition and/or pain

### ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Contagion (exposure to another person's suicide or to graphic/sensationalized accounts of suicide)
- Access to lethal means including firearms and drugs
- Prolonged stress factors (including harassment, bullying, relationship problems)
- Stressful life events (including death, a relationship break up, an academic failure, family discord)

### HISTORICAL FACTORS

- Previous suicide attempts
- Family history of suicide attempts