

# Is Your Teen or Tween Thinking of Suicide?

**Teen Suicide** (killing yourself) can be a scary thought for parents. Here are some signs that a teenager might be thinking about suicide.

## Signs Your Child or Teen May Be Thinking of Suicide:

- Your teen talks about or writes about
  - suicide
  - death/dying
  - feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
  - things being better without them
- Your teen stops talking to family or friends and spends a lot of time alone.
- Your teen has extreme mood swings.
- Your teen's sleeping or eating pattern changes.
- Your teen is using drugs or drinking alcohol.
- Your teen doesn't want to do the activities they used to like.
- Your teen stops caring about how they look.
- Your teen starts doing risky or self-destructive things.
- Your teen is giving away personal items that were special to them.
- Your teen is very impulsive and engages in risky behavior
- Your teen secures access to lethal means, e.g. stocking medications, gaining access to guns.



## Where Can My Teen Get Help?

If you're concerned that your teenager might be suicidal, get help.

- Call Passport's 24-hour Behavioral Health/Crisis Line at **(844) 800-5154** -or-
- Call or text the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **988** or text **"HOME"** to **741741**. When you call for help, counselors will talk with you or your teen and help you decide on next steps. If your teen is in immediate danger, call 911 or take them to the emergency room.

Teens who are LGBTQIA+ may be at a higher risk for suicide. Here are some helpful LGBTQIA+ resources and hotlines:

- **The Trevor Project**  
Hotline for LGBTQIA+ Students  
**Call (866) 488-7386**  
**Text "START" to 678-678**  
**www.thetrevorproject.org**

- **Trans Lifeline (877) 565-8860**  
Hotline for transgender individuals experiencing a crisis.



Many teens have other things going on that can contribute to stress, depression, or anxiety. These feelings can increase the risk of suicide.

**These things include:**

- There is a family history of suicide, substance use disorder, or violence.
- Your teen has a behavioral health diagnosis or is using drugs or alcohol.
- Your teen is experiencing a stressful life event for the first time.
- Your teen has been abused or bullied or has experienced recent trauma.
- Your teen has been exposed to suicidal behaviors such as from family, friends, in the news or in fiction.
- Your teen had a recent conflict with close family or friends.



## Some Ways to Help Teens and Tweens

Here are some steps to help your teen cope with difficulties and stressors.

1. Encourage your tween or teen to talk about all aspects of their lives and listen with love. This means listening without judgment or solutioning when your child or teen opens up about their feelings and stress - be respectful, caring, supportive, and show concern.
2. If you are worried, ask. Asking your child if they are thinking about harming or killing themselves won't increase their risk of suicide.
3. Model good mental health habits for your tween or teen. Show them how you can make and learn from mistakes. Talk openly about feelings in a way that doesn't burden your child - talk about how you manage your own stress and what you do when you feel down or overwhelmed.
4. Promote appropriate use of social media and talk openly with your child about what they read and see on social media.

If you are concerned about your teen, Passport covers the cost of mental health services. If you are not sure where to start, call us at **(800) 578-0603 (TTY: 711)**. We want to help you and your teen get the care you need!

Sources: [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org), [www.suicideispreventable.org](http://www.suicideispreventable.org)



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