

# Teen Suicide Prevention: How to Listen, Assess, and Guide Teens in Their Time of Need



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**TEEN SUICIDE PREVENTION**

Cheryl Eskin, MFT and Michelle Carlson, MSCPH

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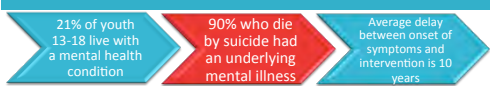
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### Mental Health Statistics in the U.S.



**HOW CAN WE HELP?**

Know the signs & start the conversation!

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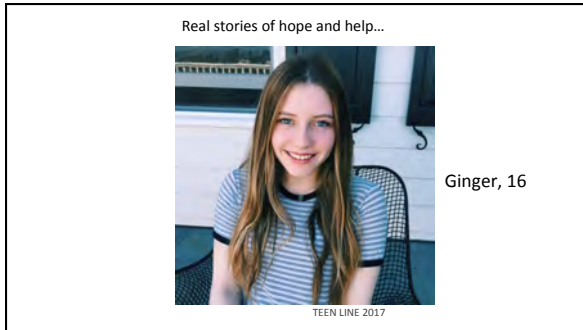
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# Teen Suicide Prevention: How to Listen, Assess, and Guide Teens in Their Time of Need



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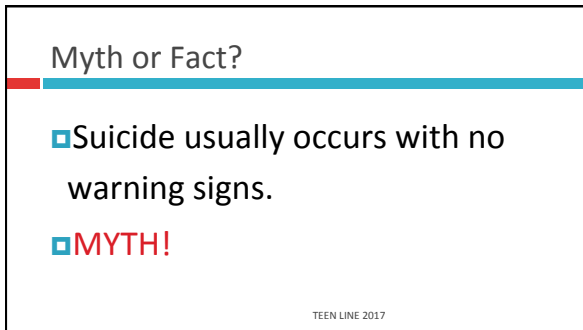
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# Teen Suicide Prevention: How to Listen, Assess, and Guide Teens in Their Time of Need

Myth or Fact?

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☐ People who take their own life are weak and just looking for “attention.”

■ MYTH!

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Myth or Fact?

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☐ Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head.

■ MYTH!

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Suicide Specific Information

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- ☐ Not everyone who thinks about suicide makes an attempt
- ☐ 17% of high school students report seriously considering suicide
- ☐ Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death among 10-24 year olds

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# Teen Suicide Prevention: How to Listen, Assess, and Guide Teens in Their Time of Need

### Risk Factors for Suicide

- ❑ Previous suicide attempts
- ❑ Recent loss
- ❑ Access to guns
- ❑ Suicide and/or mental illness in family
- ❑ Abuse & bullying
- ❑ Stress resulting from prejudice/discrimination – LGBTQ+
- ❑ Stigma around mental illness & asking for help
- ❑ Alcohol or drug abuse

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### A Better Understanding

### Stressors

I can't see what's on the other side!

Depression  
Bullying  
Identity  
Family  
Loss  
School  
BF/GF  
Friends

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Helpless

Pain

No way out

Hopeless

Alone

Tunnel vision

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### Buffers/Protective Factors

- ❑ “Permission” to talk about feelings
- ❑ Someone to talk to who will really LISTEN
- ❑ Responsibility to the community
- ❑ Connectedness – to individuals, family, community & social institutions
- ❑ Problem solving skills – ability to adapt to change
- ❑ Religion

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### How Can You Help?

**Ask!** ➡ Are you thinking of killing yourself?

- ❑ I’m really concerned for your safety. Are you thinking of killing yourself?
- ❑ When people are feeling extremely upset, they can have thoughts of suicide. Is this something you’ve been thinking about?

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**What if they say YES?**

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**ASSESS!**

- Do you have a plan?
  - Is it realistic and/or easily accessible?
- Do you have a specific time frame?
- Have you attempted before?

If they answer YES, call 911 or the PET team.  
If they answer NO, professional help should be obtained ASAP.

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**Do and Don'ts with Suicidal Teens**

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- Be comfortable with the word "suicide."
- Know how to assess for plans, means, lethality, etc.
- Safety Plan - Involve collaterals as much as possible (including school, siblings, etc)
- Don't promise to keep their suicidal thoughts a secret.
- No debates about the moral aspects of suicide.
- Let the teen know in advance if you plan to involve others

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**If they're not suicidal, but you're still concerned....**

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- Talk and LISTEN to them.
- Let them know you appreciate their sharing
- Connect with parents (if appropriate)
- Give them opportunities to shine
- Provide resources
- Take care of yourself

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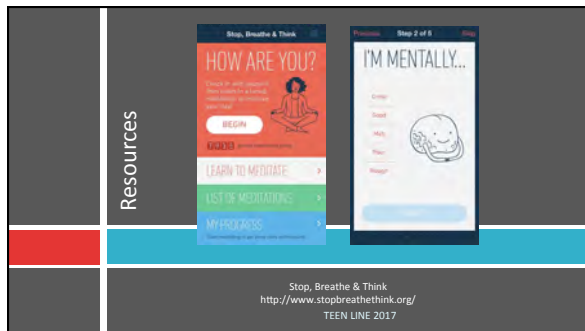
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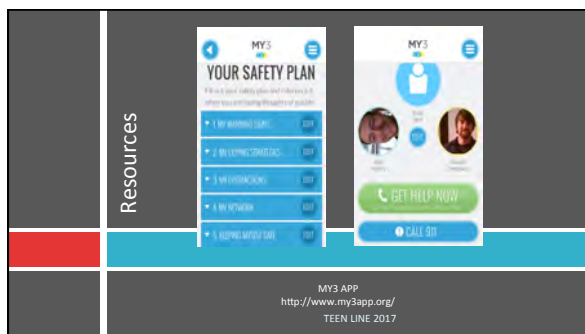
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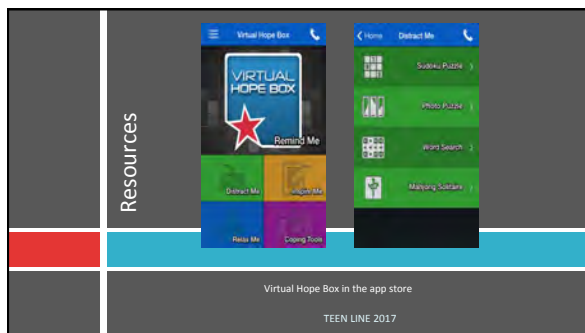
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Any questions?:

Please contact Cheryl Eskin, Program Director, at 310-423-1604 or [cheryl@teenlineonline.org](mailto:cheryl@teenlineonline.org) or Michelle Carlson, Executive Director, at 310-423-1084 or [michelle@teenlineonline.org](mailto:michelle@teenlineonline.org)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!**

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