

# Warning signs of suicide in children and teens

Common warning signs for suicide include:

- Making suicidal statements.
- Being preoccupied with death in conversation, writing, or drawing.
- Giving away belongings.
- Withdrawing from friends and family.
- Having aggressive or hostile behavior.

It is extremely important that you take all threats of suicide seriously and seek immediate treatment for your child or teenager. If you are a child or teen and have these feelings, talk with your parents, an adult friend, or your doctor right away to get some help.

Other warning signs can include:

- Neglecting personal appearance.
- Running away from home.
- Risk-taking behavior, such as reckless driving or being sexually promiscuous.
- A change in personality (such as from upbeat to quiet).

## Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts

Certain problems increase the chances of suicidal thoughts in children and teens. Other problems may trigger a suicide attempt.

Problems that increase the chances of suicidal thoughts include having:

- Depression or another mental health problem, such as bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness) or schizophrenia.
- A parent with depression or substance abuse problems.
- Tried suicide before.

- A friend, peer, family member, or hero (such as a sports figure or musician) who recently attempted or died by suicide.
- A disruptive or abusive family life.
- A history of sexual abuse.
- A history of being bullied.

Problems that may trigger a suicide attempt in children and teens include:

- Possession or purchase of a weapon, pills, or other means of inflicting self-harm.
- Drug or alcohol use problems.
- Witnessing the suicide of a family member.
- Problems at school, such as falling grades, disruptive behavior, or frequent absences.
- Loss of a parent or close family member through death or divorce.
- Legal or discipline problems.
- Stress caused by physical changes related to puberty, chronic illness, and/or sexually transmitted infections.
- Withdrawing from others and keeping thoughts to themselves.
- Uncertainty surrounding sexual orientation.

## Depression

Signs of depression, which can lead to suicidal behavior, include:

- Feeling sad, empty, or tearful nearly every day.
- Loss of interest in activities that were enjoyed in the past.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Difficulty thinking and concentrating.

- Complaints of continued boredom.
- Complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or fatigue with no actual physical problems.
- Expressions of guilt and/or not allowing anyone to give him or her praise or rewards.

Take any mention of suicide seriously. If someone you know is threatening suicide, get help right away.

Help is available. For additional information, visit [MagellanHealth.com/MYMH](https://www.MagellanHealth.com/MYMH)

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