

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

- Suicide is the second leading cause of death for adolescents in the United States. *
- In recent years, more young people have died from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, congenital birth defects, and diabetes combined. *
- For every young person who dies by suicide, between 100-200 attempt suicide. *
- Males are four times as likely to die by suicide as females, although females attempt suicide three times as often as males. *

SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE

Here is what you can do:

- **Talk** to your student about suicide. Asking direct questions will not put ideas into their heads, as many fear. Asking for help is the single greatest skill that will protect your student. Help your student identify and connect to caring adults to talk to when they need guidance and support.
- **Know** the risk factors and warning signs of suicide. Participate and frequently review the suicide prevention training information from your school district.
- **Remain calm.** Becoming too excited or distressed will communicate that you are not able to talk about suicide.
- **Listen** without judging. Allow for the discussion of experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Be prepared for expression of intense feelings. Try to understand the reasons for considering suicide without taking a position about whether such behavior is justified.
- **Supervise** constantly. Do not leave the individual alone until a caregiver (often a parent) or school crisis team member has been contacted and agrees to provide appropriate supervision.
- **Ask** if there is a plan for suicide. If it does not put you or the student in danger, attempt to remove the suicide means.
- **Respond** immediately. Escort the student to a member of your school's crisis team. If you are unsure of who is on your school crisis team, find the principal, assistant principal, school social worker, psychologist, counselor, or school nurse.
- **Join** the crisis team. You know your student the best. Provide essential background information that will help with assessing the student's risk for suicide. When a teacher says, "this behavior is not like this student", this is critical information indicating a sudden change in behavior.

*M. Heron, D. L. Hoyert, S. L. Murphy, J. Xu, K. D. Kochanek, & B. Tejada-Vera. (2009, April). Deaths: Final Data for 2006. National Vital Statistics Reports, 57(14).

**Lieberman, R., Poland, S. & Cassel, R. (2008). Suicide intervention. In Thomas, A. & Grimes, J., Best practices in school psychology V. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Source: Los Angeles County Youth Suicide Prevention Project.