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SPAN-California
Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network - California

P.O. Box 235260
Encinitas, CA 92023

Symptoms of Depression

- Feeling sad, anxious or having an empty mood that does not go away
- Feeling guilty, worthless or hopeless
- Having trouble concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling very tired or lacking energy
- Having trouble sleeping, staying asleep or sleeping too much
- Having little interest in eating or eating all the time
- Feeling irritable or restless
- Having aches and pains that don't go away no matter what you do
- Having little interest or find little pleasure in activities you once enjoyed, including sex
- Having thoughts of death or suicide

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Previous suicide threats, gestures or attempts
- Symptoms of depression
- Loss of interest or pleasure in formerly enjoyed activities
- Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- Sudden changes in mood or behavior
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Loss of energy
- Lack of concentration, indecision
- Giving away favorite possessions
- Thoughts or speaking about death or suicide
- Use of alcohol or drugs to blunt psychological pain

Need more information?

For Immediate Help in a Crisis:

- Call 911
- Call 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
- Call your local suicide prevention crisis line

For Additional Information on Suicide Prevention Contact:

American Association of Suicidology (AAS)
4201 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Suite 408
Washington, D.C. 20008 (202) 237-2280
www.suicidology.org

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
120 Wall Street, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10005 (212) 363-3500
www.afsp.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

SPAN-USA
www.spanusa.org

SPAN-California
www.span-california.org

Suicide Prevention Resource Center
www.sprc.org

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**SPAN-California
P.O. Box 235260
Encinitas, CA 92023
(760) 753-4565 • www.span-california.org**
Span-California is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization of concerned citizens and professionals dedicated to the prevention of suicide through statewide and community partnerships.

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Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network - California

Suicide Prevention: *Risk Factors and How to Help Someone in Crisis*

The idea of someone we love completing suicide is frightening to contemplate. Most people ignore the subject or think it just can't happen to them. It can. In California, suicide is a leading cause of death, particularly for teens and the elderly.

Choosing to become informed is something each of us can do to help prevent suicide. This brochure describes risk factors, protective factors, symptoms of depression and the warning signs that up to 75% of suicidal persons display. It also advises how to help someone in crisis.

Suicide prevention information

Suicide Risk Factors

- Mental disorders: particularly depression and other mood disorders, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders and certain personality disorders
- Alcohol and other substance abuse
- Hopelessness
- Impulsive or aggressive tendencies
- History of trauma or abuse
- Some major physical illnesses
- Previous suicide attempt
- Suicide death of family member/loved one
- Job or financial loss
- Divorce or death of spouse
- Relationship or social loss
- Easy access to lethal means
- Legal trouble/IRS trouble
- Academic/social failure in school
- Lack of social support and sense of isolation
- Stigma associated with help-seeking effort
- Barriers to accessing health care, especially mental health and substance abuse treatment
- Certain cultural and religious beliefs
- Exposure to, including through the media, and influence of others who have died by suicide

Protective Factors

- Effective clinical care for mental, physical and substance use disorders
- Easy access to a variety of clinical interventions and support for help-seeking
- Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide
- Strong connection to family and community support
- Support through ongoing medical and mental health care relationships
- Skills in problem solving, conflict resolution and nonviolent handling of disputes
- Cultural and religious beliefs that discourage suicide and support self-preservation

Where to Seek Help in a Crisis

- Call local suicide prevention crisis line or 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)
- Call or go to a therapist or family doctor
- Call 911, if suicide is imminent
- Call subject's family and/or friends
- Go to local emergency room
- Go to local psychiatric hospital
- Go to local mental health clinic
- Call local county mental health service
- Call school counselors, teachers, clergy or law enforcement

What You Can Do

- Take all threats, gestures and previous attempts seriously! And, make sure your loved one's professional caregiver does also.
- Express your concern. Be a nonjudgmental listener.
- Ask what the matter is. Get the person in crisis to talk about his/her problems.
- Don't try to "talk" them out of suicide. This only indicates you're not listening.
- Let them know you care and have a sense of what they are feeling and that they are not alone.
- Don't be afraid to talk about suicide directly, or ask if they have a plan.
- Help them understand their problems are temporary and can be solved.
- If they were in crisis before, ask how they resolved it. Can they apply the same solution now? Discuss what other alternatives there might be.
- Never agree to keep suicidal thoughts or plans a secret.
- If professional help is required, help them find it. It may be necessary to go with them.
- If the crisis is acute, do not leave them alone until help is available. Remove firearms, knives, razors medications and other potentially dangerous items from the area.
- After assistance is obtained, continue to follow up with the person's treatment and progress. Take an active role in ensuring that treatment compliance occurs.



Join Today to Make Suicide Prevention a Priority in California

Suicide Prevention Advocacy Network (SPAN)-California is a force for suicide prevention, an arena for collaboration among agencies and a voice in our state capitol. Please help SPAN-California continue its work advising and educating lawmakers. Join today to make suicide prevention a reality in California.

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_____ Other

Thank-you. Your gift is tax-deductible.

What can I do to help?