

Helpful Methods to Spot Suicidal Tendencies in Your Teen

Teen suicides have been on my mind again. They're far too prevalent. Young people choose, for a variety of reasons, to end their lives. It's a permanent decision they think is a solution. If they're thinking at all.

If you've heard me speak, you probably know I'm also concerned for what I call:

- **Intellectual suicide** – They give up thinking and studying because so much feels irrelevant and overwhelming. Trying and failing is too painful.
- **Social suicide** – They give up on people and relationships because people can't be trusted and can be mean. They've been rejected and hurt too often.
- **Emotional suicide** – They give up feeling because there's so much suffering and pain in the world and their world. Their heart hurts too often and too deep.
- **Spiritual suicide** – They give up on God because Christians and the church have disappointed them. They may not have a proper biblical view of the God of the Bible. Having faith and hope doesn't seem possible any more.
- **Physical suicide** – Death that may begin with self-harm and other unhealthy decisions.

Parents, teachers, pastors, friends and community leaders who know teenagers can prevent suicide. How? We can help them process pain well. We can guard their hearts and minds to prevent pain. We can ask better questions. We can answer their questions. We can share our feelings. We can accept their feelings. We can guide them toward truth. We can invest. We

can.

Preventing suicide starts with knowing teenagers.

- What do they believe? Why?
- How do they feel? Why?
- What are their dreams? Why?
- What concerns them? Why?
- What are they passionate about? Why?
- What problems would they like to help solve? Why?
- What talents and gifts do they have that will help them meet other people's needs?
- What needs do they have that they wish someone would help them with?
- Who would they love to be friends with?
- Who do they think is supportive?
- Do they know how to ask for help?

Every type of suicide is preventable. We must invest.

Knowing teens starts with knowing children. We must pay attention to our children. What ticks them off and turns them on? What are their dreams? Who do they wish they could become? Do they know what's realistic? How to change what frustrates them? How to change their attitudes toward the things they can't change? How to find support? How to ask for help?

If we don't care about our children, but think we can wait until they're preteens and teens, we can't. If we don't start asking questions until they're older, they'll resent our apathy and absence and not help us parent them well. They may not let us know them.

Beliefs that drive young people to suicide often creep up. They start as small issues for small children. They look like minor frustrations. If not dealt with, these small issues grow as children grow. Pay attention to the intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual areas. What do they need?

Teens will have fewer problems when we parent well when they're children and they'll have more confidence solving the problems they do have. We can be available to answer their questions. We can be available to help them process their feelings. We can model wisdom before them. We can.

Let's parent and teach to prevent intellectual suicide, social suicide, emotional suicide and spiritual suicide. This can prevent physical suicide. What will you do today? {eo}

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