

SAFE MESSAGING FOR STUDENTS

1. You are not alone. You matter. If you're worried about yourself or someone you know, or you need some emotional support, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. It's free, confidential, and available 24/7. You don't have to be suicidal to call. You can also reach the Crisis Text Line by texting "START" to 741741.
2. Healing, hope, and help are not only possible, but are happening every day. For every one person who dies by suicide, 278 people think seriously about suicide but don't kill themselves. The overwhelming majority of these individuals will go on to live out their lives.
3. Don't be afraid to talk to your friends about how they feel and let them know you care about them.
4. Be an "upstander" and take actions to reduce bullying and increase positive connections among others. Report concerns.
5. Never promise to keep secret behaviors that represent a danger toward another person.
6. **Suicide is preventable.** People considering suicide typically say something or do something that is a warning sign. Always take warning signs seriously and know the warning signs.
 - Suicide threats, both direct ("I am going to kill myself.") and indirect ("I wish I could fall asleep and never wake up."). Can be verbal, written, or posted online.
 - Suicide notes and planning, including online postings.
 - Preoccupation with death in conversation, writing, drawing, and social media.
 - Major changes in behavior, appearance/hygiene, thoughts, and/or feelings. This can include extreme mood swings, or sleeping too little or too much, or an increase in reckless behavior, including increased use of drugs or alcohol.
7. Separate myths and facts.
 - **MYTH:** Talking about suicide will make someone choose death by suicide who has never thought about it before. **FACT:** There is no evidence to suggest that talking about suicide plants the idea. Talking with your friend about how they feel and letting them know that you care about them is important. This is the first step in getting your friend help.
 - **MYTH:** People who struggle with depression or other mental illness are just weak. **FACT:** Depression and other mental illnesses are serious health conditions and are treatable.
 - **MYTH:** People who talk about suicide won't really do it. **FACT:** People, particularly young people who are thinking about suicide, typically demonstrate warning signs. Always take these warning signs seriously.
8. **Never leave the person alone; seek out a trusted adult immediately.** School-employed mental health professionals like your school psychologist are trusted sources of help.
9. Work with other students and the adults in the school if you want to develop a memorial for someone who has died by suicide. Although decorating a student's locker, creating a memorial social media page, or other similar activities are quick ways to remember the student who has died, they may influence others to imitate or have thoughts of wanting to die as well. It is recommended that schools develop memorial activities that encourage hope and promote positive outcomes for others (e.g., suicide prevention programs).