



Family Guide to Youth Suicidal Thinking

In a suicidal youth's mind:

- Distress, torment and anxiety are seen as overwhelming
- Coping abilities are inadequate
- Suicide is seen as a way to end the turmoil
- The need to communicate pain is desperate
- Unable to think about the irreversibility of suicide or the consequences of death on their friends and family
- They believe that their thinking is rational.

Basic Information for Parents:

1. ***Do not be afraid to talk to your child.*** Talking to your children about suicide will not put thoughts into their head. In fact, all available evidence indicates that talking to your child lowers the risk of suicide. The message is, "Suicide is not an option, help is available."
2. ***Suicide-proof your home.*** Make the knives, pills and, above all, the firearms inaccessible.
3. ***Utilize school and community resources.*** This can include your school, suicide prevention groups or hotlines, or private mental health professionals.
4. ***Take immediate action.*** If your child indicates he/she is contemplating suicide, or if your gut instinct tells you they might hurt themselves, get help. ***Do not leave your child alone.*** Even if he denies "meaning it," stay with him. Reassure him. Seek professional help. If necessary, drive your child to the hospital's emergency room to ensure that she is in a safe environment until a psychiatric evaluation can be completed.
5. ***Listen to your child's friends.*** They may give hints that they are worried about their friend but be uncomfortable telling you directly. Be open. Ask questions.

For families: If you suspect your child has depression now is the time to make sure your child does not have access to firearms. (Firearms were the most commonly used method of suicide for Lackawanna County youth.) If treatment is needed a variety of effective treatments are available. To find the right services you can do the following:

- Seek referrals from professionals such as your family physician.
- Call your insurance company for a list of approved therapists.
- Talk to other families in their communities.
- **If you have any concerns about depression, ask your family doctor for a screening. It is a series of questions and only takes a few minutes.**

Resources

National Crisis Lines

National Suicide Prevention Lifelines 1-800-273-TALK and 1-800-SUICIDE

24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention services available to anyone in suicidal crisis. Your call is free and confidential. From immediate suicidal crisis to information about mental health, crisis centers are equipped to take a wide range of calls. Some of the reasons to call are listed below.

- Call to speak with someone who cares
- Call if you feel you might be in danger of hurting yourself
- Call to speak to a crisis worker about someone you're concerned about

Resources in Susquehanna County

Crisis Hotline: 570 348-6100
NEPA: 570 853-3577
NHS: 570 876-5655

Resources in Lackawanna County

Scranton Counseling Center: (570) 348-6100
Northwestern Human Services: (570) 282-1732
Dial 911 for immediate assistance.

Mental Health Information and Advocacy

The Advocacy Alliance
(570) 342-7762
www.theadvocacyalliance.org



National Alliance for Mental Illness
(570) 342-1047
www.namipascranton.org

Lackawanna-Susquehanna Counties
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program
(570) 346-5741 www.lswmhmr.org

Pennsylvania Youth Suicide Prevention
Initiative
www.payspi.org