

Warning signs

Learn these warning signs for suicide. This will help you notice them in your own child if there is a crisis:

- Not wanting to be with friends, family and the community
- Loss of interest in activities usually enjoyed
- Big mood swings: this may mean that your loved one is not feeling stable. They may feel suicidal.
- They talk, write or think about death a lot.
- Aggressive behavior: a person who's feeling suicidal may act more aggressive or have times of rage
- Impulsive or reckless behavior
- Using or an increased usage of alcohol and drugs



Higher levels of care

For many families, finding their way through the mental health system can be confusing. If your child is having mental health concerns that affect their daily life, one of these programs may help:

Intensive Outpatient Programming (IOP): Usually meets daily or a few times a week for a few hours per day. It may be every day. Focus is on specific treatment goals and skill-building.

Partial Hospitalization Programming (PHP): Treatment is at least 4 hours a day, or more, every day. It is very structured. Treatment includes services by a psychiatrist or psychiatric nurse practitioner. The treatment focuses on providing comprehensive treatment services.

Inpatient hospitalization: Treatment in a secure, locked hospital unit. This provides the safest space for people having a mental health crisis that puts themselves or others at risk. Treatment includes evaluation and discharge planning with members of the treatment team.

Residential treatment: Longer-term treatment in a residential facility. This is often in a home or dorm-like setting. The level of care is between inpatient and day treatment. Focus is on applying skills and ongoing management of mental health concerns.



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Responding to your child's mental health needs



Kids deserve the best.

Home safety

When your child was a toddler, you set up your home to keep them safe. You can also do things to make your home safer for your older child or teenager. Limiting access to things that can be used for self-harm can help prevent suicide during a mental health crisis. **Even if you think your child is not at risk for suicide, there's no reason to take a chance on it. Crisis can happen at any moment. Suicide is the third-leading cause of death among teens and pre-teens.**

Here are some steps you can take right away to make your home safer for your family:

1. Secure or remove guns.

Guns are the most deadly way people die by suicide. It is important to take them out of the house or car, or keep them in a secure, locked place or box.

- a. Call local police to see if they offer free storage.
- b. You can get free gun safety locks or storage through Children's Wisconsin

2. Limit medicines and alcohol.

Medicine overdoses are the most common way teens try to kill themselves.

- a. If you have old prescriptions or medicines that you no longer use, take them out of your home. Call your local pharmacy or police department to find a close drop-off site.

- b. If you need to keep medicines at home, keep only a small amount at a time. If you have questions about how much is safe to keep at home, call Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) or ask your doctor.
- c. Lock up all medicines or drugs (prescription and medicine you can buy over the counter). If there are illegal drugs in the house, get them out. It is not safe for your child to have easy access to medicines or drugs.
- d. If you keep alcohol in your home, only keep a small amount. Alcohol use can cause your child to act on impulse. For example, choosing to overdose on medicine. Also, alcohol can make an overdose more deadly.

3. Be supportive.

- a. Watch for any major changes in your child's behavior or mood.
- b. It's ok to ask your child if they are thinking about suicide. You might be surprised how it can start an important conversation. It may help your child tell you they need help.



- c. Talk with your child about making a safe home. Include them in the decisions, if you can, about how to make a safe home.

By taking these precautions, you are creating a safer space for your own child and your family.

Outpatient mental health services

Meeting with an outpatient mental health provider is very important. It is a great way to get your child the support they need for their mental health. A mental health provider can share ways to help and support your child during a crisis. There are many types of outpatient services. Talk to your child and your primary care doctor about which referral is best for your family:



Therapist or Counselor evaluates and treats mental health concerns with counseling and psychotherapy.

Psychologist provides counseling and psychotherapy. They can do psychological testing and treat mental health concerns.

Psychiatrist trained in preventing, diagnosing and treating mental illness. They can prescribe medicines if needed.

Crisis resources

There is help! If you or your teen are worried about suicide, get help, anytime, through crisis phone lines or your local emergency room.

Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line:
Text 741-741

Call 911. You can request a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer. They are trained in responding to people living with a mental health condition.

Phone apps: Jason Foundation – A Friend Asks, Suicide Safety Plan

Children's Teen Resources: Well-being and mental health childrenswi.org/teenresources

Local crisis services are available through _____ County.

They can be reached at: _____.

Your county crisis team can also tell you about resources and services for mental health.