Facts About Youth Suicide


- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents in the United States, being surpassed by accidents and homicide.
- Suicide is the cause of 12.3% of all deaths among 15-24 year olds.
- There are approximately 10 suicides per every 100,000 youth annually.
- Approximately 11 youths 15-24 die everyday by suicide.
- Every 2 hours and 15 minutes a person under the age of 25 dies by suicide.
- In 2001, 3,971 youths between the ages of 15-24 completed suicide.
- Suicide rates for adolescents have more than doubled since the 1950’s.
- In the past 60 years, suicide rates for males between 15-24 have quadrupled and have doubled for females of the same age.
- The current suicide rate is 8.2 per 100,000.
- The male to female ratio of completed suicides was 5:1 among the ages of 15-24 years.
- Firearms remain the most commonly used method of suicide for youth between the ages of 15-24 regardless of race or gender, and accounting for approximately 57% of completed suicides.
- Research has demonstrated that having firearms available in the home contributes significantly to the increase in youth suicide.
- Death by suicide accounts for 7.3 out of every 100,000 black males between the ages of 15-24.
- For every death by suicide in this age group, approximately 100-200 attempts are made. It is documented that a prior suicide attempt indicates a high risk factor for an eventual completion.
- Research has indicated that most teens complete suicide in their home after school hours.
- Within a typical high school classroom, approximately one boy and two girls have attempted suicide in the past year.
- The typical profile of an adolescent who completes suicide is a male who dies from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. The profile for a typical suicide attempter that does not have a fatal result is a female who ingests pills.
• Any indication of self-harm by an adolescent should be taken seriously since not all attempters will admit their intent to kill themselves.

• Most adolescents who attempt suicide seem to have some interpersonal conflict and the suicidal behavior seems to be an effort to change the behaviors and attitudes of others.

• Adolescents who make repeated attempts at suicide generally use their behavior as a means to cope with their problems and will have more chronic symptomatology. This group usually has a history of substance abuse and suicidal behavior in their families.

• Most teenagers will exhibit one or more of the following behaviors that if observed warrants a professional evaluation:

  Presence of a psychiatric disorder (i.e. Depression, substance abuse, conduct disorder, trouble with the law, running away)

  Expresses suicidal thoughts or thinks about death and dying in a context that is sad and/or hopeless.

  Demonstrates impulsive and aggressive behavior

  Has been exposed to a recent severe stressor (i.e. significant real or anticipated loss, unplanned pregnancy, humiliating experience)

  Significant family conflict and instability