



## MENTAL HEALTH WARNING SIGNS

The following signs of concern apply to both suicide and behavioral health concerns. Please refer to a truncated list of signs that might indicate an impending suicide attempt. In the event of concern regarding a possible, imminent suicide attempt, please call the crisis number provided below and throughout this site.

### Signs of Concern in Adolescents and Young Adults:

- Confused thinking
- Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)
- Feelings of extreme highs and lows
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Strange thoughts (possibly even delusions)
- Seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Suicidal thoughts
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments
- Substance abuse
- Signs of Concern In Older Children and Pre-Adolescents:

### Substance abuse

- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive complaints of physical ailments
- Changes in ability to manage responsibilities-at home and/or at school
- Defiance of authority, truancy, theft, and/or vandalism
- Intense fear
- Prolonged negative mood, often accompanied by poor appetite or thoughts of death
- Frequent outbursts of anger
- With almost all children, the stresses of growing up can get to be "too much," at any specific time. The question of normative developmental stressors stresses associated with normal age related maturation and development should be taken into account, when considering warning signs.

Starting July 16th, 2022 "988" is activate nationally

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**1-800-273-TALK 1-800-273-8255**

*(Will continue to work after "988" is activated)*

### When and What to Ask:

Don't wait. If a youngster is making concerning comments regarding their deep unhappiness and/or exhibiting warning signs, if you are not the parent of the child, alert their parents. If the comments/signs are being made by a young, competitive adult ask them directly if they are contemplating suicide. It may seem awkward, but the stakes cannot be higher.

If you are a parent, don't hesitate to ask if your child if they are thin about killing themselves. Considerable research has overwhelming concluded that asking someone whether they are considering killing themselves WILL NOT contribute to them following through and doing so. Conversely, the hesitation to asking may be something that you will cause you great regret later.

If is understandably difficult to pose such a serious question to a young person; but, as stated above, when considering what is at stake it is absolutely necessary.

Be prepared for their reply. Don't be intimidated or frightened. You might find yourself in uncharted waters, but when a person's life is at stake, it is time to step-up and be accountable.

### If Now you Know, What's Next?:

Time after time in life, responsible, caring adults fail to act out of a sense of loyalty, not want to betray another person's trust. Trained, experienced professionals are available to help. If you ask, if you find out, don't stop there. There are resources available to your noted throughout this site. The BMS Project, Inc.'s mission is to promote mental health awareness and suicide prevention for young competitors and one of the primary ways that we pursue our mission is to provide first-step mental health advice, as described throughout this site. We do not do suicide crisis intervention, but please do the right thing and seek professional assistance. Ask, listen, then act. Don't hesitate.

If you or a loved one is in crisis, please refer to the phone number below.

*Francis A. Martin, Ph.D. and Christopher Nickson, Ph.D.*

**Other Mental Health Talk Lifeline #'s are available at [TheBMSProject.org/mental-health-crisis/](https://TheBMSProject.org/mental-health-crisis/)**

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