Student Gatekeeper

A student gatekeeper is someone who is informed about the warning signs and risk factors for suicide, including the DO's and DON'Ts when helping yourself or someone who might be thinking about suicide. We know adolescent years can be complicated, stressful, and confusing. Many things can affect the way you think, feel, and act; including academic expectations, peer pressure, trying to “fit in,” and even body image. All of these things can begin to take an emotional toll. You may start to face challenges and situations that feel extremely overwhelming and may not have an immediate solution; this is why the Student Gatekeeper handout was created. In this handout, you will find tips on how to be supportive, stay engaged, and keep yourself or someone else safe. Everyone plays a role in suicide prevention…including you!

Know the risk factors of suicide
- Depression and mental health disorders
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Previous suicidal behavior/attempt(s)
- Recent losses (death of a loved one, a break-up, separation or divorce of parents)

Know the warning signs of suicide
- Suicide notes on paper, text, social media, email, etc.
- Having a plan, method and access to means
- Extreme sadness, hopelessness, depression
- Making final arrangements (giving away prized possessions such as clothes, jewelry or pictures; goodbye notes on text or social media)
- Acting recklessly (substance/alcohol abuse, jumping from high places, dangerous behaviors)
- Extreme mood swings (from feeling extreme sadness to experiencing intense levels of energy)
- Isolation from family and friends

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

If you know SOMEONE who might be suicidal, here are some Do’s and Don’ts that can help:

DO
- Tell an adult, IMMEDIATELY. Even if you are not sure your friend is suicidal, this is definitely the time to be safe and not sorry!
  - Talk to your parent/caregiver.
  - Talk to your friend’s parent/caregiver.
  - Tell a trusted adult at school (teacher, counselor, social worker, nurse, principal, etc.).
  - Tell a trusted adult in the community (Wellness Center/School Mental Health Clinic staff, hospital staff, pastor, coach, neighbor, etc.).
  - Be direct. Talk openly about suicide, you will not be “putting ideas into their heads.”
  - Listen. Allow them to express their feelings.
  - Be non-judgmental.
  - Get involved. Show support.
  - Encourage them to get help.
  - Offer hope. Tell them you care about them.
  - Know that keeping your friend alive is a team effort; that’s why it’s important not to keep this a secret.

DON’T
- Be sworn to secrecy. Make no deals. You have to tell to save your friend.
- Dare him or her to do it.
- Act shocked. This might make them feel bad.
- Leave them alone.
- Minimize their problems.
If YOU are in a crisis or thinking about suicide, there is help. You are not alone. Here are some Do’s and Don’ts that can help:

**DO**
- Tell an adult, IMMEDIATELY.
  - Talk to your parent/caregiver.
  - Tell a trusted adult at school (teacher, counselor, social worker, nurse, principal, etc.).
  - Tell a trusted adult in the community (pastor, coach, neighbor, etc.).
  - Seek help from the nearest Wellness Center/School Mental Health Clinic.
  - Speak honestly about your thoughts and feelings; it can save your life.
  - Know that you can overcome this feeling.
  - Know that you are not alone.

**DON’T**
- Keep this a secret.
- Be afraid to ask for help.
- Turn down help from an adult, instead allow others to show you that they care.
- Isolate yourself.

### Resources for Children/Adolescents

If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911.

**Community Hotlines**
- Didi Hirsch Suicide Prevention Hotline (877) 727-4747 (24 hours)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-TALK (8255) (24 hours)
- Trevor Lifeline (866) 488-7386 (24 hours)
- Teen Line (800) 852-8336 (6pm-10pm daily)

**Text and Chat Resources**
- Crisis Text Line – Free, 24/7, confidential
  - Text LA to 741741
- Crisis Chat (11am-11pm, daily)
  - http://www.crisischat.org/chat
- Teen Line – text “TEEN” to 839863 (6pm-10pm)

**Online Resources**
- http://www.didihirsch.org/
- http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
- http://teenline.org/
- http://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide

**Smartphone Apps**
- MY3
- Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages

For information about suicide safety and reporting concerns, please visit http://suicideprevention.lausd.net