



Los Angeles Unified School District  
**Student Health and Human Services**  
 School Mental Health

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 213.241.3841  
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# Suicide Prevention Awareness for Parents/Caregivers

**Suicide** is a serious public health problem that takes an enormous toll on families, friends, classmates, co-workers, and communities, as well as on our military personnel and veterans. Suicide prevention is the collective effort of all adults that support and work with students, including parents/caregivers, families, local community organizations, mental health practitioners, and related professionals. The aim is to reduce the incidence of suicide through education, awareness, and services.

## SUICIDE IS PREVENTABLE.

### Warning Signs

Warning signs are observable behaviors that may signal the presence of suicidal thinking. They might be considered “cries for help” or “invitations to intervene.” These warning signs signal the need to inquire directly about whether the individual has thoughts of suicide. If so, then suicide prevention strategies will be required.



- Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness
- Significant changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts, and/or feelings
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Suicide threats (direct and indirect)
- Suicide notes and plans
- History of suicidal ideation/behavior
- Self-injurious behavior
- Preoccupation with death
- Making final arrangements (e.g., giving away prized possessions, posting plans on social media, sending text messages to friends)

### Risk Factors

While the path that leads to suicidal behavior is long and complex and there is no “profile” that predicts suicidal behavior with certainty, there are certain risk factors associated with increased suicide risk. In isolation, these factors are not signs of suicidal thinking. However, when present they signal the need to be vigilant for the warning signs of suicide.

- Access to means (e.g., firearms, knives, medication)
- Stressors (e.g., loss, peer relations, school, gender identity issues)
- History of depression, mental illness, or substance/alcohol abuse
- History of suicide in the family or of a close friend
- History of mental illness in the family

### Here's What You Can Do:

#### LISTEN

- Assess for suicide risk.
- Listen without judgment.
- Ask open-ended questions, such as:
  - *Tell me what happened?*
  - *How long have you been feeling this way?*
  - *Have you thought about suicide?*

#### PROTECT

- Take action immediately.
- Do not leave your child alone. You or a trusted adult should supervise/monitor your child.

- Consider developing a safety plan at home and at school.

#### CONNECT

- Go to your child's school for support from school administration, mental health personnel, or a counselor.
- Contact Department of Mental Health, law enforcement, or child protective services, as needed.
- Help your child identify adults they trust at home and at school.

#### MODEL

- Remain calm. Establish a safe environment to talk about suicide.
- Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions as you listen without judgment.

#### TEACH

- Learn the warning signs and risk factors and provide information and education about suicide and self-injury.
- Teach your child how to ask for help and identify adults they can trust at home and at school.
- Teach healthy ways to cope with stress, including deep breathing, writing/drawing, exercise, or talking.
- Seek options for school and community resources, including referrals to professional mental health services.

# Mental Health (MH) and Wellness Centers



## North

### Valley MH Center

6651A Balboa Blvd., Van Nuys 91406  
Tel: 818-758-2300

## West

### Crenshaw MH and Wellness Center

3206 W. 50th St., Los Angeles 90043  
Tel: 323-290-7737

### Washington MH and Wellness Center

1555 West 110th St., Los Angeles 90043  
Tel: 323-241-1909

## South

### 97th Street MH Center

Barrett Elementary School  
439 W. 97th St., Los Angeles 90003  
Tel: 323-754-2856

### San Pedro MH Center

704 West 8th St., San Pedro 90731  
Tel: 310-832-7545

### Locke MH and Wellness Center

316 111th St., Los Angeles 90061  
Tel: 323-418-1055

### Carson MH and Wellness Center

270 East 223rd St., Carson 90745  
Tel: 310-847-7216

## East

### Bell/Cudahy MH Center

Ellen Ochoa Learning Center  
7326 S. Wilcox, Cudahy 90201  
Tel: 323-869-1352

### Ramona MH Center

231 S. Alma Ave., Los Angeles 90063  
Tel: 323-266-7615

### Gage MH and Wellness Center

2880 E. Gage Ave., Huntington Park 90255  
Tel: 323-826-1520

### Elizabeth LC MH and Wellness Center

4811 Elizabeth St., Cudahy 90201  
Tel: 323-271-3650

## Central

### Belmont MH and Wellness Center

180 Union Place, Los Angeles 90026  
Tel: 213-241-4451

### Roybal MH Center

1200 West Colton St., Los Angeles 90026  
Tel: 213-580-6415

For clinic referrals visit:  
[smh.lausd.net](http://smh.lausd.net)

School Mental Health  
(213) 241-3841

# Understanding Suicide: Myths & Facts

To understand why people die by suicide and why so many others attempt to take their own lives, it is important to know the facts. Read the facts about suicide below and share them with others.

**Myth:** *Suicide can't be prevented. If someone is set on taking their own life, there is nothing that can be done to stop them.*

**Fact:** Suicide is preventable. The vast majority of people contemplating suicide don't really want to die. They are seeking an end to intense mental or physical pain. Most have a mental illness. Interventions can save lives.

**Myth:** Asking someone if they are thinking about suicide will put the idea in their head and cause them to act on it.

**Fact:** When someone you know is in crisis or depressed, asking them if they are thinking about suicide can actually help. By giving a person an opportunity to open up and share their troubles you can help alleviate their pain and find solutions.

**Myth:** Someone making suicidal threats won't really do it, they are just looking for attention.

**Fact:** Those who talk about suicide or express thoughts about wanting to die, are at risk for suicide and need your attention. Most people who die by suicide give some indication or warning. Take all threats of suicide seriously. Even if you think they are just "crying out for help"—it is in fact a cry for help — so help.

**Myth:** It is easy for parents/caregivers to tell when their child is showing signs of suicidal behavior.

**Fact:** Unfortunately, research shows that this is not the case in a surprisingly large percentage of families. This illustrates the importance for parents/caregivers to be attentive to warning signs and risk factors; to ask direct questions; and be open to conversation.

## What Should I Do If I Am Worried About My Child?

If you believe that your child is thinking about suicide, approach the situation by asking. Asking is the first step in saving a life and can let them know that you are here for them and will listen. Here are some examples of how you may ask: *Have you thought about suicide? or Sometimes when people feel sad the way you do, they think about suicide. Have you ever thought about it?*

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION / After Hours Services

If you need IMMEDIATE help, call 911.

For a psychiatric emergency, contact the Department of Mental Health 24-hour ACCESS Center at (800) 854-7771.

## Resources for Parents/Caregivers & Children/Adolescents

### Community Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
(800) 273-TALK (8255) (24-hour)  
Trevor Lifeline (866) 488-7386 (24-hour)  
Teen Line (800) 852-8336 (6pm-10pm daily)

### Online Resources

<http://www.didihirsch.org/>  
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>  
<http://teenline.org/>  
<http://www.afsp.org/understanding-suicide>

### 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)

### Smartphone Apps

MY3  
Teen Line Youth Yellow Pages

